FAITH BUILDS A CHAPEL

WINIFRED C. BOYNTON'S

STORY OF AN ADVENTURE IN CRAFTSMANSHIP

$8.50

FAITH BUILDS A CHAPEL

Here is a book to inspire and delight through sheer pride of ownership. It describes a stimulating adventure you can share with profit. It tells the story of how Mrs. Boynton and her husband, lacking any formal training in craftsmanship, conceived and built entirely by hand over a period of nine years, a 15th century Norwegian Chapel on their Summer estate in Door County, Wisconsin. Their initial project was to carve the fifty-two dragon heads which terminate the supporting beams of the roof. When this task was completed, they met the greater challenge of arches, pew-ends, pulpit, font, altar and cross within the Chapel, where virtually every surface is carved. Forty-one murals painted by Mrs. Boynton cover walls and ceiling. The finished work is as fine and as beautiful as any executed by the master professional craftsman.

Four full-color plates and page after page of amazingly detailed pencil drawing portray the breath-taking beauty of the Chapel. When you read Mrs. Boynton's charming account of these fruitful years, you will understand why thousands of visitors from far and wide, who come and marvel at this building with its unique paintings and carvings, share the inspiration that made it possible.

In this book, Mrs. Boynton has told why she decided to build the Chapel and the problems of craftsmanship which arose during the long years of building. It is an inspiring story, beautifully illustrated by Mrs. Boynton; for just as she had learned carving, painting, and fine woodworking in order to enrich the Chapel, so too did she teach herself pencil drawing to enrich this book. You will share the ever-increasing wonder of the Boyntons that in the menial labor and attendant meditation involved in the actual work, they could find divine guidance for their hands and a rewarding peace of mind.

GEN

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 1833 01218 1811

GC
977.5
B711F

Door County Wisc

10cu/Hw

IBM 9818

FAITH BUILDS A CHAPEL

FAITH BUILDS A CHAPEL

THE STORY OF AN ADVENTURE IN CRAFTSMANSHIP

BY

WINIFRED C. BOYNTON

REINHOLD PUBLISHING CORPORATION

1953

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 53-9170

Copyright 1953

Winifred Case Boynton

Printed in the United States of America by The Beck Engraving Company, Philadelphia

TO

MY HUSBAND

OUR CHILDREN

OUR GRANDCHILDREN

Teach us, O Lord, to do little things
as tho they were great, because of the majesty of Christ
who does them in us and who lives our life;
and to do the greatest things as tho they were little and easy,
because of His omnipotence.

Pascal

PRELUDE

Our Chapel stands within the deep stillness of these northern woods, overlooking the far-reaching waters of Lake Michigan. It is sheltered by tall white pines that lift long arms in prayer and by cedars with pointed spires reaching upward into the sky. Softly the wind stirs the leaves of the nearby birches and from across the water the bell-buoy sounds faintly. Sea gulls spread their wings, gliding swiftly through the air and occasionally an eagle passes high above, winging its way with slow measured beat.

In these quiet surroundings the seed-idea of a Norwegian Chapel, blown to us across the span of centuries, found soil prepared to receive it for peace was already here. In the cool, clean-washed winds that gently ripple the waters, in the forest where bright shafts of sunlight make golden pools along the woodland trails, peace breathes through everything bringing with it the consciousness of God's presence.

Since the beginning of time the world has been seeking peace. Feeling that there must be the consciousness of peace within each one of us before it can be found throughout the world, we built this retreat. Far removed from confusion and aggression it offers a sanctuary for all. It invites communion with God. It is so small, so intimate; God is so near He can hear the faintest whisper of prayer. Prayer is the life of the Chapel and as you pause on the threshold there is a spiritual sense of peace, a complete harmony within the Chapel. The muted tones of the murals, the richness of carved wood, are blended together in the soft light flowing through the stained glass windows. Here, through meditation and prayer that inner stillness which is the center of all Being is found, the "peace . . . which passeth understanding."

Our Chapel is but one of thousands of others where man can find comfort and security in the knowledge of God within him, and strengthened by this inner peace can reach out with an enlightenment and love for all of mankind.

This story tells of how the seed-idea of a Chapel took root and flowered into a little sanctuary of peace. It tells of the fulfillment of dreams and aspirations at first but vaguely recognized which, in time, became clear and strong. It weaves together the threads of family life within the pattern of our home to include the Chapel as the dominant motif. It tells of the peace that came to my husband and me, through this work of our hands, during the nine years of world turmoil while the Chapel was being built. This deepening sense of peace within ourselves brought the realization of what the Chapel could mean to others.

There was no thought during those years that there would ever be this written evidence of our efforts. But now, our children have asked that I go back to the time when there was no Chapel, when there was only an idea, so that there may be a chronicle to bear witness to the thought behind our work, to our joys and struggles, to our successes and failures. All of these, with the nails and timbers, are part of the structure of the Chapel. In asking this they may be quite unconscious of the greatest truth of all, that even as we have built ourselves into the Chapel, so the Chapel has built itself into us. And so it will be my purpose to bring into light the experiences of these past years, to build again with the tools of memory, our Chapel which was built for the glory of God.

CHAPTER I

FIRST SUMMER

1939

Whereupon are the foundations . . . fastened?
or who laid the cornerstone thereof?

Job 38:6

UPON THIS ROCK

THE WORKMEN arrived early on the day when the foundations of our Chapel were to be laid. There was the resourceful village contractor who had supervised the work on all our other buildings. Our caretaker brought two farmer friends with a pair of sturdy plow horses hitched to a big scoop. Family and workers were all united, and it seemed that our hearts sang together with the morning stars as the scoop dug into the earth and the horses strained at the traces.

It hardly seemed possible in the exuberant enthusiasm of the moment that for years the mere mention of my desire to add a Norwegian Chapel to our other Scandinavian buildings had been the cause of great consternation. How clearly I remember the time we were all gathered around the dinner table when I first, somewhat wistfully, made this suggestion. A stunned silence followed. The amazed glances of the children flew to their father. Then in mounting crescendo I heard a loud dissenting chorus composed of our children, Edith, Carl, Donna, Peggy, Ted, Zanne and their several spouses. Alas for me, the voice of Don, my husband, mingled with theirs! Year after year the response to my occasional feelers continued to be one of incredulity and even mild amusement. "*Why* do you want to build a Chapel? What on earth would you do with it? Who would come to the services? Do you plan to engage a part-time minister or do you hope that Dad, at this late date, will take the Cloth?" Poor Don . . . Scot to the bone, practical business man, ardent sportsman, was the target of much mirth. And then suddenly it happened! The family was in complete accord. Of course the Chapel should be built! We started at once with our plans and now at last we were ready to begin with the building.

A site had been selected about one hundred and fifty feet southwest of the main house where there is a gentle rise of ground from the level of Lake Michigan. Our eyes had sought a "quiet habitation" for this little tabernacle of Peace which we hoped would stand for future generations to enjoy. Usually in this northland, the massive layers of limestone have only the shallowest covering of earth, but here a full depth of three feet was found. Don had transplanted elsewhere all the little trees growing within the boundaries staked for the Chapel. He has a special technique for this, which may be responsible for the high percentage that live and flourish in their new surroundings; but I suspect that a large part of his success is due to his love and care of them.

It was well in the afternoon, nearly sundown, before the rock foundation was reached. There on the exposed limestone, made by the crevices between the rocks, was revealed a clear and symmetrical Cross. What an omen! Surely this little house was "Founded upon a rock" which wind and rain could not affect. On this base of living stone the foundations were laid, and on the cornerstone Don and I chiseled the date of August 1, 1939.

Although years had elapsed between the building of our summer home and the building of the Chapel, in retrospect it seems that from the beginning each step was preparing the way, and without our awareness, preparing us for this final fulfillment. Unknown to us the first step determined the last. We had no idea that the decision to use early Scandinavian architecture would be a vital factor influencing the building of our Norwegian Chapel. The Chapel grew out of the home.

Along the eastern shore of Wisconsin, the peninsula of Door County divides the waters of Green Bay and Lake Michigan. Halfway up the peninsula an arm of land reaches out into the blue waters of the lake and gathers to itself the town of Bailey's Harbor, once the county seat where prosperous lumber barons sailed their schooners from the harbor weighted with the glory of the forests. Now it is a quiet village that comes to life only during the Summer. And here our home is located, surrounded by woodlands that stretch at some distance along the shore of the lake.

Although the decision to use Scandinavian architecture was largely mine, it is difficult to trace the origin of this choice. Perhaps the winds blowing through the groves of white birches, the huge cone-shaped cedars and tall pines, may have whispered to me the story of early settlers from Norway and Sweden coming to these very shores. Or possibly, the ghost of my Norwegian ancestor may have been at my elbow prodding me into this selection. I was not conscious of this guiding presence but years later in thumbing through an old book of family genealogy I came upon the name of "Hrolff (Walking Hrolff)," a Viking of the tenth century, the first ancestor to whom we could trace direct descent. Here was a definite, legitimate tie-back. What a happy coincidence! I learned to my confusion that "Walking Hrolff" was a name earned by the fact that he was too fat to ride on a horse! How gleefully our children reminded me of this ancestor . . . particularly at mealtime!

Before consulting an architect it was necessary to become familiar with Scandinavian architecture of this early period so that we might select the important features we wished to include in our home. The Art Institute of Chicago was well equipped with illustrated books for this research. I made innumerable sketches and began to develop ideas both for the exterior and interior of our prospective home. I found to my delight that even the simplest and most primitive of these early peasant homes were filled with gayly decorated furniture, woodcarving, and unique, naive wall-paintings of Biblical subjects or old legends. Humor, fresh and bubbling as that of a child, was combined with floral design in a riot of color. All this was the work of peasants no more skilled than we. Here was much opportunity for decoration and creative work along lines which particularly appealed to my imagination. There was no doubt about it . . . a Scandinavian home it had to be!

In a sunny clearing set back from the water's edge, we built our home using fieldstone, taken from our own property, for the lower walls. On this solid support was placed the wide overhanging second story of rough-hewn timbers with heavily carved mullions at the corners, thus calling to mind the early architecture of the Scandinavian Stabburr, or grain-house. On the openwork ridge poles carved dragons appeared with long red tongues and glaring green eyes, guarding the family within and keeping evil away from our doors even as they did centuries ago. These dragons represented my first attempts in woodcarving.

The name selected for our home was "Björklunden Vid Sjön." This means Birch Forest by the Water. There was only a slight protest from the family before each member learned to pronounce it.

In due time gayly decorated furniture in Scandinavian peasant style appeared in every room. Naive murals of Biblical subjects or old legends patterned on the ancient Swedish Bönade were painted in oils on canvas and placed on various walls. During these busy days I experimented with designing, with wood-finishes and paints. All of this turned out to be but a preparation for the ultimate . . . the unknown challenge awaiting in the Chapel.

This growing interest finally became so urgent that I decided to visit the Scandinavian countries and took with me our oldest son, Carl. Seeing the familiar decorated furniture and wall-paintings in the Oslo Museum he almost shouted in his amazement, "Why *Mother,* everything here is just like *ours!*"

A day or two later, visiting the Norwegian National Museum in Lillehammer, we saw a little Stavkirke, or wood-chapel beside a small lake, mirrored in its quiet waters. The memory of it never left me. Here was the inspiration for our Chapel. Stavkirker are unique and in them Norway may claim to have reached "the crowning point of the mediaeval art of wooden church building." In the early eleventh century they marked the coming of Christianity to Norway. Gradually pagan idols were replaced by Stavkirker whose sharply pointed gables, rising one above the other, becoming smaller as they mounted skyward, seemed to presage the coming of a new era where a religion based on love would lift man above the darkness of paganism. Only the carved dragon-heads on the gable extremities recalled former pagan days.

And now, thousands of miles distant, centuries later, could the building of a Stavkirke again be part of a re-awakening of Christianity and a re-vitalizing of God's forces in a world once more torn by strife and war? In the years that followed this thought was ever in our minds.

With a photograph of the little Stavkirke we had seen in Lillehammer, the vivid recollections of other churches we had visited while in Scandinavia, and "De Norske Stavkirker," a Norwegian book by Dietrichson as our guides, we selected the salient features we wished to have represented in our building.

The design is purely cruciform, with nave, transepts and small rounded apse. Across the front is a tiny porch four by thirteen feet. In many of these old churches the half-enclosed porches of this type encircled the entire building. During the Black Plague they were built to shelter the afflicted ones, separating them from the congregation, but allowing them to hear the service from the seclusion of these porches. The walls of our Chapel are of rough-cut redwood planks with heavy hand-adzed beams of fir supporting a roof covered with diamond-shaped hand-split cedar shakes.

It seems to us that our Chapel architecture is a composite of all ages. "That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been . . ." It has pagan and barbaric ancestors and from these we inherit many designs and symbols often used without understanding their original source. Old ideas are combined with new, that we, in our small egotism, feel we have created. Perhaps they have been presented in a new way, joining with those ancestors whose voices we hear chanting through the ages in the designs and symbols in our Chapel. Designs of biting beasts with long bodies, twisting and turning in interlacing patterns are part of the Scandinavian symbolism of the past ages. Wishing to include as many of these old traditions as possible and at the same time to keep the Chapel simple, we decided to have each long beam which supported the roof end in a gargoyle. Only by peering under the eaves can you see these fifty-two carved heads. Long scalloped beams ending in small dragons edge the gables.

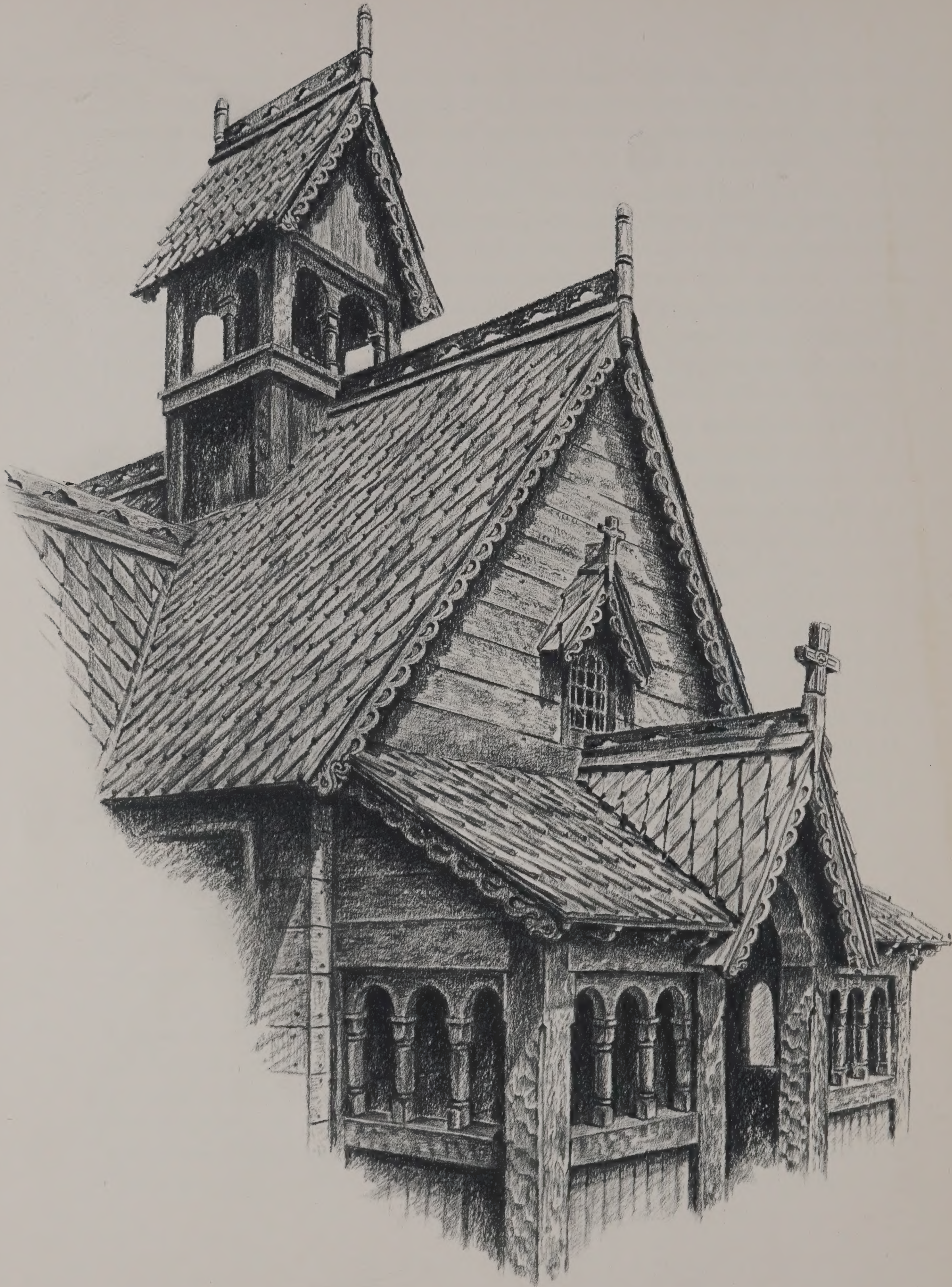
Plans had been made, but no specifications. As the building progressed the workmen called us into conference. Many were the little "international councils" we held! Four Germans, two Belgians, one Bulgarian and Don and I (two Americans) would meet to decide on some puzzling detail of a Swedish-Norwegian Chapel. Even in its building there seemed to be an expression of our belief that the true church of God should not be limited to race or creed but should be universal in its religious concept. These men and others that had helped with our main Björklunden buildings worked with the pride of the early guildsmen. They worked with us and not for us and brought to our work enthusiastic appreciation, as we did to theirs. In a sense we directed them but also they instructed and directed us. Looking back to the earlier days and our first building I can remember when the friendly mason laughingly coached me in my first attempt to spread plaster on a wall, a knowledge which was used later in the Chapel. And again, I remember borrowing the plumber's blow-torch to bring out the grain in the big wood chest in the house and how every workman took a turn at burning his "initials." Among them was the village blacksmith. He had wrought the decorative iron bands encircling this wooden chest and later made the massive bands extending across the entrance door of the Chapel. He is an iron worker of the old school, and his is a mighty art, almost lost to this generation. He works for the joy it brings him, even forgetting to send us a bill. When we remonstrated, he said "It's all there isn't it? Someday I come and add it all up and tell you how much."

Our garage became a workshop, and early each morning the cars were backed out to make room for the various members of the family who had suddenly made woodcarving their main interest in life. Laughter with gay voices and the thud of mallets hitting chisels could be heard all day long. This was overtoned by the buzz of electrical Handees, implements which beginners in woodcarving feel is the quick solution to all carving problems. Even with the combined efforts of all the family it seemed as though we could not carve fast enough to meet the demands of the carpenters. Each finished article was eagerly awaited as we rushed from the garage to the Chapel bearing grinning gargoyles showing fierce and sharp incisors. By September this intensive work had proved too much for our children. With the completion of this initial project their interest in carving waned abruptly. For Don and me it merely fanned the fires of our enthusiasm, and so long as we can stand on our feet I am sure we shall carve with our hands.

In no time at all the Chapel was actually taking shape. Not foursquare, the length being greater than the breadth, it was measured by a coiled steel tape (not by a golden reed). The length was twenty cubits (30 feet) and the breadth was fifteen cubits (22 feet) and the height equals the breadth and length divided by two (26 feet). All these measurements are according to the measure of Don.

Day by day the Chapel grew until at last the topmost gable was silhouetted against the sky. Our Chapel! Could it be true? The first thing each morning we looked to see if it was there and each evening when the day's work was done, together we closed the Chapel door. No longer was it a figment of dreams. Now it was a reality.

Standing on a low knoll in the deep quiet of the woods, the Chapel faces east according to tradition, so that the sun, the symbol of God, may be the first to enter each day. As the sun's rays streaming through the high east window, symbolize the dawning of the true light in our consciousness, so through the west windows the setting sun, with its myriad colors of refracted light, sinking only to rise again, brings the assurance of immortality.



So great was our preoccupation that Summer waned and Autumn came without our realizing it. The awareness came suddenly that south winds had turned about to the north. The small delicate leaves were whirled from the birches and yellowing maples. Storms came and rains fell. There would be days when we could do nothing but watch the elements from the windows. Each tree met and mingled with the storm in a different rhythm. The long arms of the balsam and white pines bent and swayed in a stately minuet . . . forward, back, bowing and turning, while the big buxom cedars gave themselves with utter abandonment to every gust and swirl of wind. Like fat, jolly peasants in voluminous skirts they flung their arms recklessly with carefree joy in the dance.

On these mornings we woke to find glowering clouds banked along the horizon, making the waters below dark and forbidding. But not for long! Suddenly the sun, finding an opening, would stream down, breaking the surface of the water into millions of glittering mirrors of light. Like pioneer ancestors, reading the signs of the heavens, we knew the time had come for us to go. Before leaving, everything must be battened down for the stormy months of Winter. When the final hour came and we took the turn in the road that shut Björklunden from our sight, it seemed that part of us remained behind. Another turn and we looked back to see, as far as the eye could reach, lines of tall cedars in massed formation, sentinels with pointed spears sharp against the sky. These we knew would guard the Chapel and our home until the time of our return.

CHAPTER II

SECOND SUMMER

1940

Build ye the sanctuary of the Lord God.

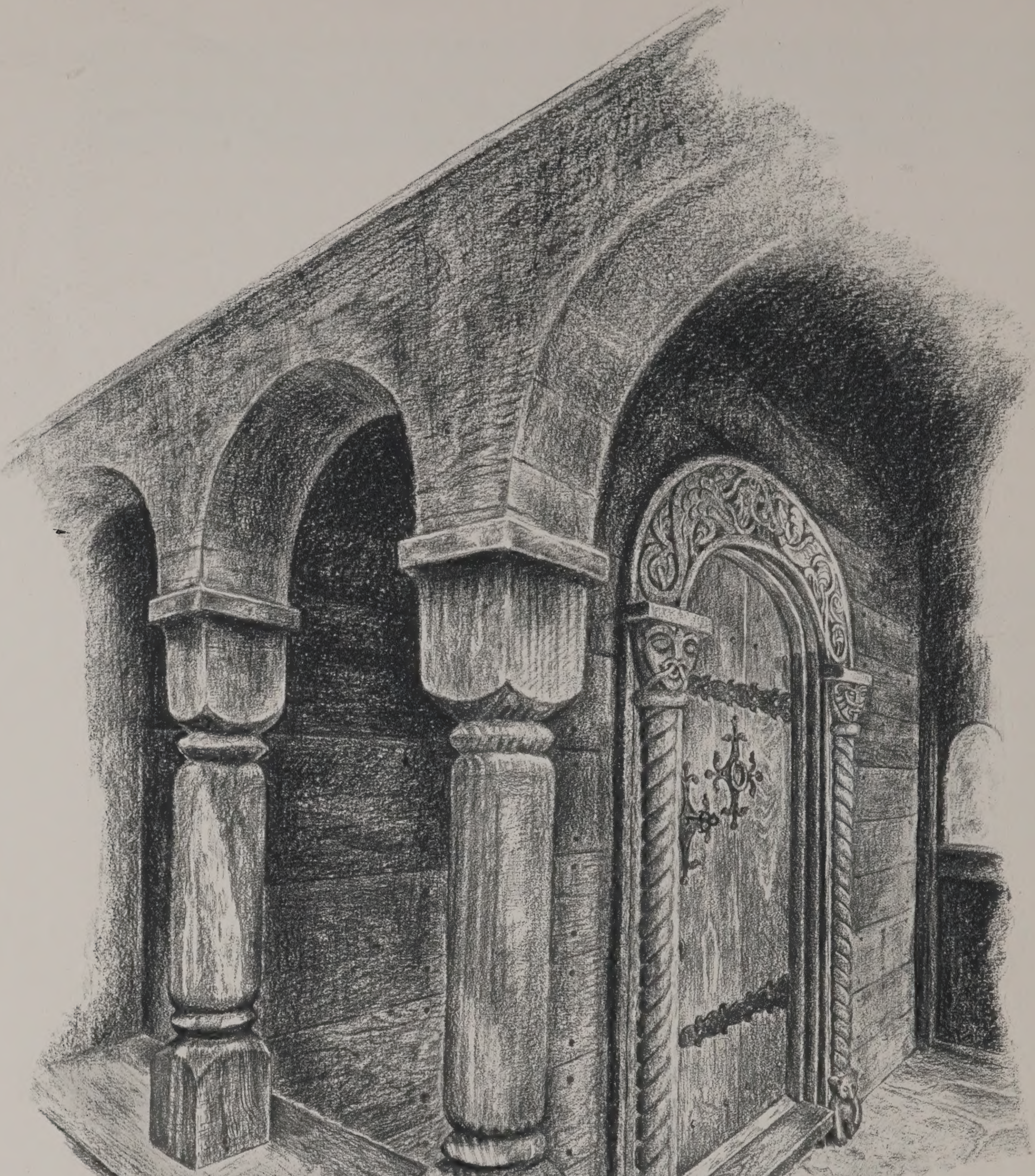
I Chronicles 22:19

THE CHALLENGE

WINTER for us is one world, Summer another. One life merged into the other as we drove northward the following Spring. Visions of the Chapel filled our minds. Before leaving, last Fall, we had painted the exterior redwood walls an antique gray in the effort to match them with the stained beams and shingles, and to give the ensemble the quality of an ancient and weathered medieval Stavkirke. But disappointment awaited us. We found the Chapel looking anything but ancient. To have used paint at all seemed to have been a great mistake.

Before long, however, Don solved the problem with twenty pounds of tri-sodium phosphate! And I went to work. The instructions said to scrub the area with as strong a solution as was desired and rinse with clear water. The strength was to be determined by the amount of gray paint that needed to remain to neutralize the strong red color of the wood. Experiments were made to ensure the right proportion. And then, when all was ready, climbing the extension ladder placed against the side of the building, single-handed, I scrubbed the Chapel! The result was even better than we had dared to hope. When people inquire, as they invariably do, how we brought about that age-old look of the Chapel, the answer is always the same—"By a series of mistakes!"

Our next project was to be the carved arch over the entrance door. We were still novices in the art of woodcarving but we had gained a little confidence by last year's efforts. Perhaps we were encouraged by the fact that the carving in these early Stavkirker was crude and in many instances had been done by unskilled peasants. We were merely following the path they marked centuries ago. Yet, unlike us, they had received some training during the long winter-bound months when the young people were taught by their



elders to work with their hands. At an early age boys learned carpentry, woodcarving, painting; while girls were taught sewing, weaving, painting and cooking. The young Scandinavian suitor rode a horse, but he sat on a saddle that he, himself, had elaborately carved. His gifts to his ladylove were heavily carved spoons, ladles, boxes, mangles, all the work of his own hands. It was quite possible that he would find her embroidering his future wedding nightshift, as that too, was traditional and every girl started her "hope chest" in this way, demonstrating the degree of her artistry by the intricacy of the design. One wonders if the groom was chosen to fit the heart or the nightshift!

During the Winter I made a typical dragon design for the arch over the entrance door so that work could be started at once on our arrival at Björklunden. Although dragons symbolize evil, they are also supposed to frighten evil away. This is likewise true of the mask-like, distorted faces which so often topped the pillars supporting the arch and which I had included in the design. In order to relate the Chapel to its environment I used the sturdy figures of two small bears for the base of these pillars in place of the customary dragons. It soon became evident, however, that it is one thing to recognize a bear, and another thing to carve one. Each new project was always an exciting challenge with the ever-present uncertainty of being able to meet it. The paws presented a real problem. In haste I went to the zoo, but the unaccommodating bears clung stolidly to the rocks with all four feet. The sports department at Marshall Field's failed me, because they had put their huge stuffed bear in cold storage and moth balls. At last I remembered the Field Museum; and there, sitting on the floor directly under the upraised paw of a big Kodiac bear, I made detailed drawings while an amused crowd of people peered over my shoulder. From these drawings two squatty bears were modeled in clay and now they were ready to be carved in wood.

When finished the dragons and distorted faces fulfilled their most frightening symbolism but the bear cubs looked too happy and contented to scare anything—and didn't! A few mornings after they were installed we discovered to our consternation that a hungry porcupine had approached without fear and nibbled off all the toes and part of the feet.

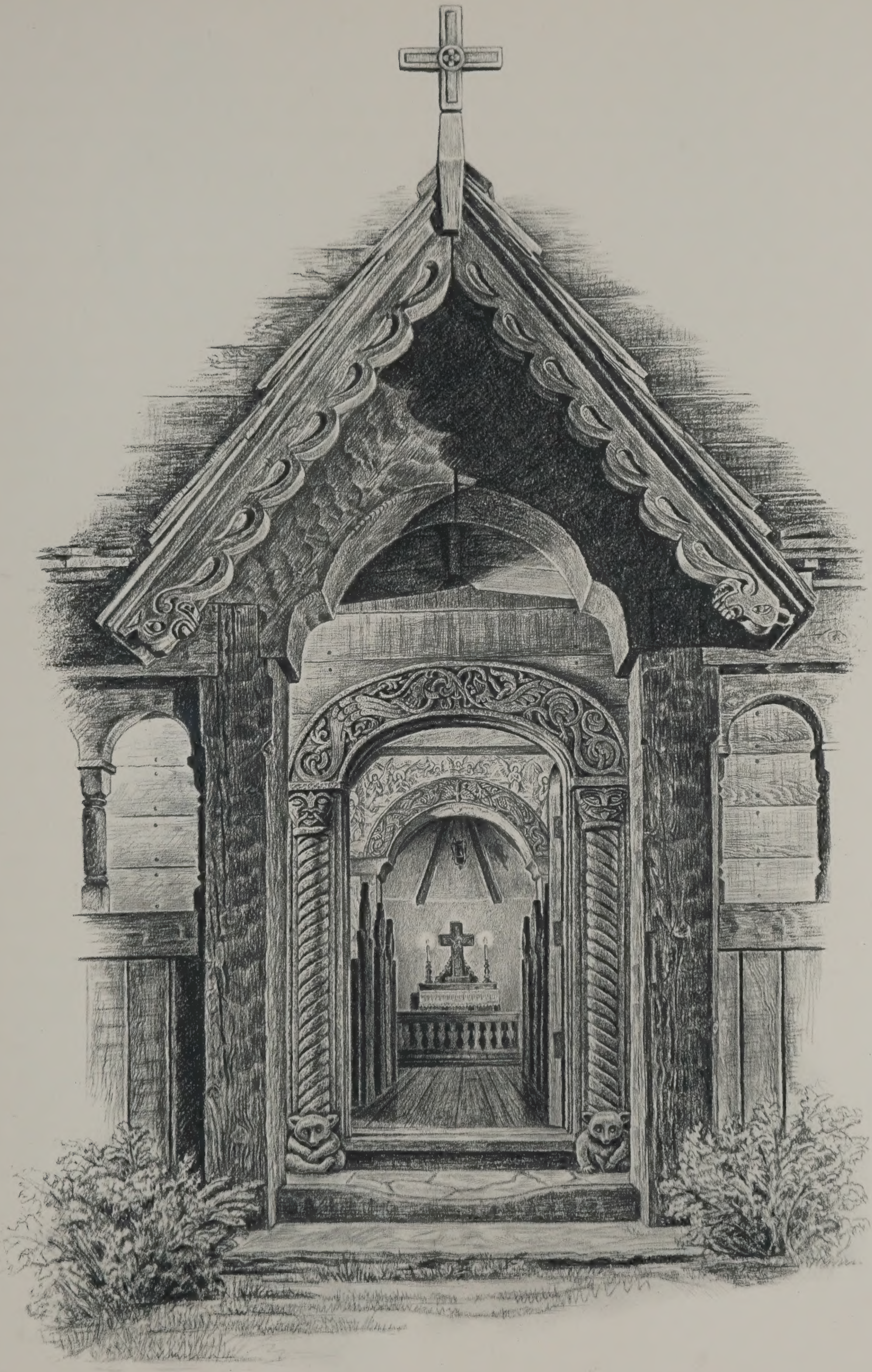
This work was constantly interrupted by normal household demands and activities. Our children, grandchildren and guests flowed through our home in a steady stream. Carving equipment was assembled in the Studio, which was also used as a guest house. This is connected with the main building by a low stone wall and a high dragon-gate. Every spare moment found me carving there, often joined by guests. One of our close friends, a musician, became so accustomed to my short staccato puffs blowing away sawdust and shavings of wood while she practised on the piano, that upon returning home, she found herself waiting for the metronomic background of my customary accompaniment. Another friend visiting at that time was a sculptress, who joined us in the Studio and modeled one of the little garden trolls or "tomtar" which I later carved in wood. But in spite of these many diversions work on the Chapel progressed steadily.

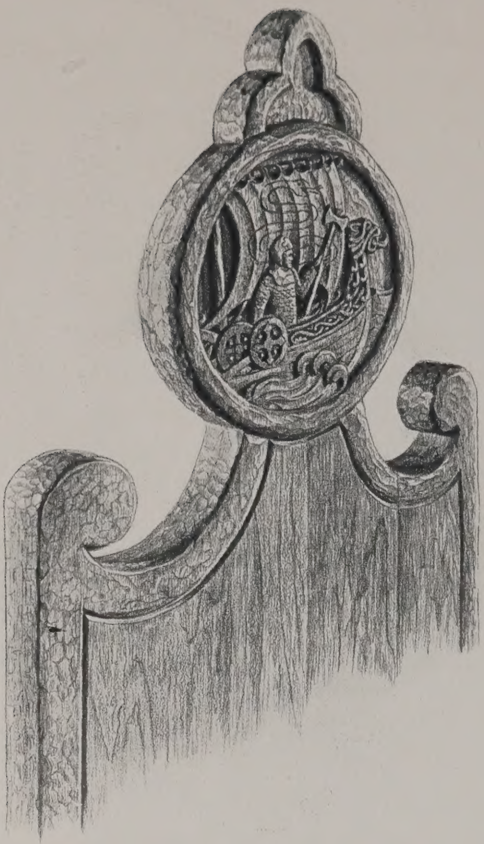
It was not long before both the arch over the entrance door and the one separating the Nave and the Chancel were completed. Our next project was to carve the twelve pew-ends. While looking over a pile of discarded designs the other day I was amused to see how many I had made for these pew-ends and how hard I had labored over them. These had seemed a great challenge and it was well that I could not look beyond to the greater tasks that lay ahead.

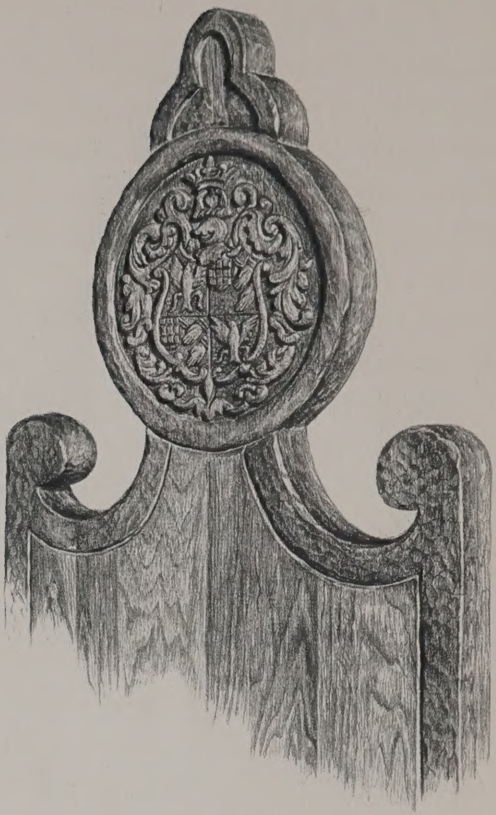
The six center pew-ends are quite massive for so small a Chapel, but typical for this period. They are five feet high and twenty inches wide. The upper part is shaped like a round head on shoulders. The carved design is within this circle, eleven inches in diameter. These are made of butternut. Designs of rabbits, squirrels, bears, birds and foxes were made. Many of them have a religious symbolism. These seemed a happy idea at first, but before long I began to feel the Chapel would be too much like a menagerie with the two little bears at the base of the columns on the porch, and the birds and beasts on the pews inside. New subjects were developed which made an interesting variety—two symbolic flower designs were selected and two legendary figures. Of these, one depicted St. Olaf of Norway standing at the carved prow of his Viking ship; while the other shows St. George slaying the dragon in true traditional form. The last two designs were the Boynton and Case coat of arms. We had much mirth over the Boynton coat of arms as contrasted with mine. A horizontal band divides Don's shield with two stars and two crescents in the upper section, and a larger crescent below. Above the helmet stands a goat—a goat for the Boynton's shield compared with the loftier symbols on the Case shield which has two spread eagles and six pairs of hands with open palms! My pride may take a terrible tumble when I find out what these heraldic devices really mean!

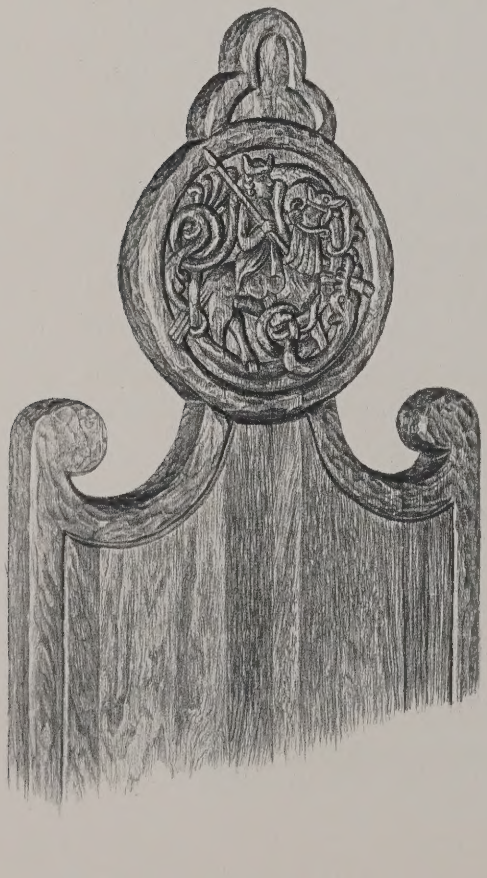
While woodcarving continued, my mind was searching for suitable material to be used for the murals of the Chapel interior. I cannot remember any serious misgivings as to this next step, or any doubts as to my ability to paint them when once the subject matter had been selected. During the past years, without realizing what lay ahead, I had been serving an apprenticeship by painting many murals within our home. As described before, these were done with oil paints on canvas in the manner of the primitive Scandinavian Bonäder of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I began with simple designs for small wall areas and finally used the ambitious subject of Creation to cover a wall sixteen by eighteen feet. This had seemed a colossal undertaking at the time. There were eighteen different segments separately designed, that fitted together to make the whole. And now, here it was again! Large blank walls staring at me as I stepped into the Chapel presented the same problem; this time there were forty-one panels in place of the previous eighteen segments.

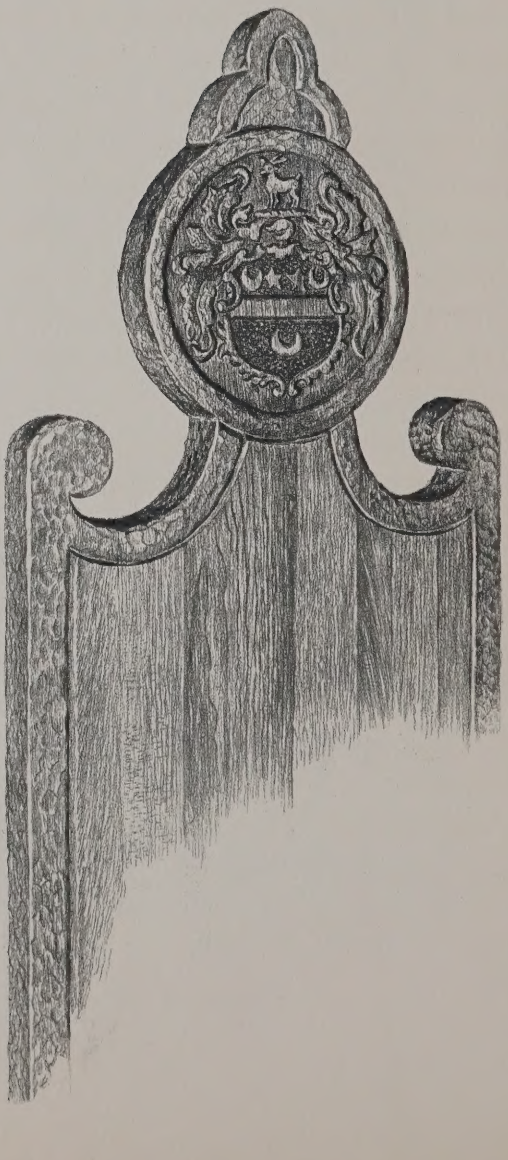
Years before there had been any thought of a specific Chapel, my mind had been storing away ideas, jotting down in a notebook, favorite passages of Scripture, bits of beauty











and wisdom gleaned from other minds. I had collected Scandinavian books both for reference and from the desire to know more of these people and of their literature and culture. Among these books was "Scandinavian Art" by Laurin Hannover Thiis and here I found a reproduction of a charming mural from a fifteenth century Chapel. Underneath was printed "Unicorn pursued by the Angel Gabriel."

At the time I wondered why Gabriel, portrayed so often as a messenger of God, was blowing his horn and pursuing the unicorn. With him were three dogs, each standing alert on his hind legs apparently hot in chase, with long tongues flopping. The unicorn, a strange little animal with one long pointed horn, had apparently come to a full stop in front of a figure which I assumed to be that of the Virgin Mary and with a wistful eye was looking inquiringly at her. Little did I realize as I turned again and again to this primitive picture that the search for its spiritual interpretation was to lead me on a devious trail through many years. There was such a simple appeal in the gentle figure and wistful unicorn that, as soon as we decided to build a Chapel, I knew I wanted if possible to use it as subject matter for one of the murals, perhaps fitting it in with legends of other Archangels. And so the search began. . . .

Heretofore the intellectual trails of my life had been in familiar and rather conventional country, but this new journey would be, for me, on uncharted paths. I had the same breathless joy of anticipation that I used to have as a child starting off for an unknown destination. Wherever I went in my travels, my feet led me eventually up the steps of some library. Through endless halls of learning, I hunted Archangels and unicorns. I traveled from the front cover to the back of one book after another, always hopeful that each new volume held within it the answer, just the *right* answer, for the subject matter to be used in the Chapel. All of this research seemed doomed to failure as one trail after another had to be retraced or abandoned.

Many Archangels were found besides the four that I vaguely remembered, Gabriel, Raphael, Michael and Uriel. These were studied carefully, but no definite inspiration was found which could be developed into something suitable for the murals in the Chapel.

Reluctantly the idea of using any Archangels was given up, and the trail turned to Norwegian and Swedish Saints. This proved to be an interesting but difficult one to travel because of the limited field of research. We heard of a Norwegian minister in a nearby town and went to see him. When a young man graduating from the Theological Seminary in Norway, he had written his thesis on a Norwegian Saint whose life, he felt, had interesting material suitable for murals in our Chapel. He loaned this to us until we were able to have it translated into English. But we found that this was not the answer.

The next trail led to St. Olaf, another Norwegian. A wonderful idea he seemed, and for many months I lived over every incident in his colorful life. It looked as though he really *was* the answer and excitement mounted as I realized how pictorial his life had been. He was, according to the legend I read, born in the tenth century of parents of high birth, but he was an unwanted child. In those pagan days it was the custom to place such a child in the woods where fairies, or "little people," would find and care for it. A woodsman by the name of Rane saw a glowing light in the forest, and seeking to find from whence it came, found the baby—sleeping. He adopted the baby boy and gave him the name of Olaf and took him eventually to France, where we hear of his being christened in Rheims Cathedral. As Olaf grew into manhood, he determined to return to Norway and establish there the religion of Christianity which he had accepted. In time he organized a fleet and stealing up the fjords of Norway, conquered the unsuspecting and unprepared Norwegians. Wherever he found a pagan idol he replaced it with a Christian church, a Stavkirke, such as the model of our Chapel. What historical interest was here, and how much there was that seemed fitting for our murals! Sketches were started and designs for the panels developed but gradually I became convinced that St. Olaf was not the answer to our problem. It seemed that the spiritual meaning and message of the Chapel would be defeated if, on entering under the carved portal, the mind and spirit were held down to the span of a single human life.

And so the trail led on. My weary feet sought another path which unknown to me was leading nearer and nearer to the ultimate goal. My willingness to toss aside all these ideas over which I had worked so long was incomprehensible to Don who should have known that the hunter is continually urged on by the thrill of the chase.

In the study of Stavkirker I found that many interiors were completely covered with design, the ceiling as well as walls. These designs often had some definite symbolic significance. This last observation led to the study of symbolism which opened doors into new and unexplored fields of interest. Symbols are used constantly without any awareness that they are being used. The letters of the alphabet are merely symbols, words formed by letters are symbols, the written notes of music are symbols of tone. Perhaps the first reason for using symbolism was a need to express in some definite form that which seemed inexpressible. At the time of Christ, during the days of Christian persecution, symbols became a medium of communication, the meaning of which Christians alone would understand. Throughout the ages symbolism has been used in churches, gradually becoming broader in its scope. I became deeply interested in religious symbolism but was dismayed to find how often it related to death. It was my purpose to seek symbols pertaining to life and the inspiration of living spiritually and joyfully.

One day in my research I found an interpretation of the religious significance of the unicorn which seemed to somewhat clarify the meaning of the little Swedish mural showing Gabriel and the unicorn. I read it eagerly. It was a legend of olden times portraying the unicorn as the most ferocious of all animals, evasive and unconquerable by man, yet as coming gently to an undefiled virgin in the forest. Gabriel was not even mentioned. The explanation was far from complete but it pointed toward the final interpretation which came later. The naiveté and simplicity of the little primitive seemed so eminently fitting for our Chapel that I began to design the mural at once. Part of this primitive, changed and redesigned, was adapted for the panel in the south transept.

Before final work was begun it became my custom to submit any design I had made to an artist who spends his summers in a neighboring village. Our friend, Walter Vladimir Rousseff, a Bulgarian by birth, came as a young man to America. He studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, where, in subsequent years, his work received recognition and important awards. During the summer months at Björklunden I studied with him, when possible, gaining inspiration from his method of teaching and from his approach to Art in general. He was to play an important role in the development of the Chapel and there was no limit to his cordial and generous response when we turned to him for advice.

Now with Walt's approval of the design for the Gabriel mural it seemed time to start the actual painting. But wait, not yet, not yet! First the problem that commercial plaster presented had to be solved. We had no idea that the kind of plaster used could make such a difference. Plaster to us was just plaster! Ah me, so many mistakes were made in our ignorance! However these became thrilling challenges. "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." It was a long wait!

Soon the Studio resembled the Pittsburgh paint experimental areas with its dozens of plaster samples on which experiments were made with every suggested remedy. I had planned to use the familiar medium of oil paints. The problem deepened when we learned that the commercial plaster used on the walls of the Chapel contained both lime and lead, elements which in time would turn black all oil paints that were not based on earth pigments. What then, were we to do?

So many times, from some unknown source, the answer to a problem would come. A visitor to Björklunden, the Director of the Art department of the Chicago Art Institute, solved our problem by suggesting that casein be used instead of oil paints of any kind, saying the fresco effect which was most desired could be more easily achieved with this medium.

Working still on plaster samples, I found a satisfactory technique. By using sandpaper between various applications of color, there resulted a vibration of tone which was rich and deep, yet still looked old and faded, even allowing the plaster in certain spots to show through the color as though time had worn it off.

At long last I was ready to begin! I was scared to death, and yet could hardly wait to get started. First the design had to be transferred from the paper to the plaster wall. The plaster seemed to resist any mark traced through the carbon paper. Only now and then was there a faint indication of a line, enough to redraw the design with a light colored crayon. Even from what seemed to be most accurate designs, countless changes were made as the work progressed.

The part that is most amazing in looking back is that I ever had the courage to begin at all, having so little previous experience or knowledge on which to rely. There was a definite feeling that I, myself, was really *not* doing it. I was merely the small point of the needle placed on the record, and from the record poured limitless beauty of color and tone. The one important job for me was to keep that needle free from the dust of self-depreciation and self-limitation. This I tried to do but was not to be spared countless moments of anguish in the effort.

One well-remembered day, after hours of fruitless effort, I seemed to have ruined the whole panel. Utterly discouraged I went to bed, but not to sleep. My mind went over and over the efforts of the day. Where had I failed? Why were the results so different from those anticipated? Sleepless hours passed with the questions still unanswered, until in desperation I decided to go to the Chapel and settle this anxiety once and for all. It was either ruined or it was not! Putting a bathrobe over my nightgown, for even July nights are cold, I stole down the stairs, flashlight in hand. Our faithful dog, Paddle, was there to meet me and wagged his tail encouragingly and followed me protectively out into the night. We entered the Chapel and I played the spot of light back and forth over every inch of the panel. It was perfect . . . just the way I wanted it to look! What had happened? Slowly I played the spot of light again to be sure I was not mistaken. And then I laughed and laughed for of course I knew just what had happened . . . the plaster had dried and the colors showed clear and fresh as I had expected. Any plaster becomes a dark gray when wet, and the colors imposed on it had been lost behind that screen of dampness. Like stealthy culprits we crept back into the house; Paddle to flop down on the fur rug in front of the dying embers, and I to crawl into bed and to drop into untroubled sleep.

The final chapter to complete our interpretation of this unicorn legend was found some years later. Following a Seminar held at the Chicago Art Institute during the showing of the French tapestries, I discussed the subject of the unicorn with the Curator of Medieval Art. He disagreed completely with the professor who had just lectured on the unicorn. Confused and dismayed at such differing authorities, I said, “What is a poor searcher after the truth to do?” He answered, “My dear lady, you must ask your question at the level on which you want your answer; not from below looking up nor from above looking down, but on the same horizontal level.” It was evident that the answer lay within myself. Through all these years of research I had hoped to find a satisfactory solution already worked out for me. Actually, the authors of the various books *had* solved it to their satisfaction, but those solutions did not satisfy me. Therefore I must ask my own question on the level on which I hoped to find the answer. My approach was made clear, and it was not long before the answer came.

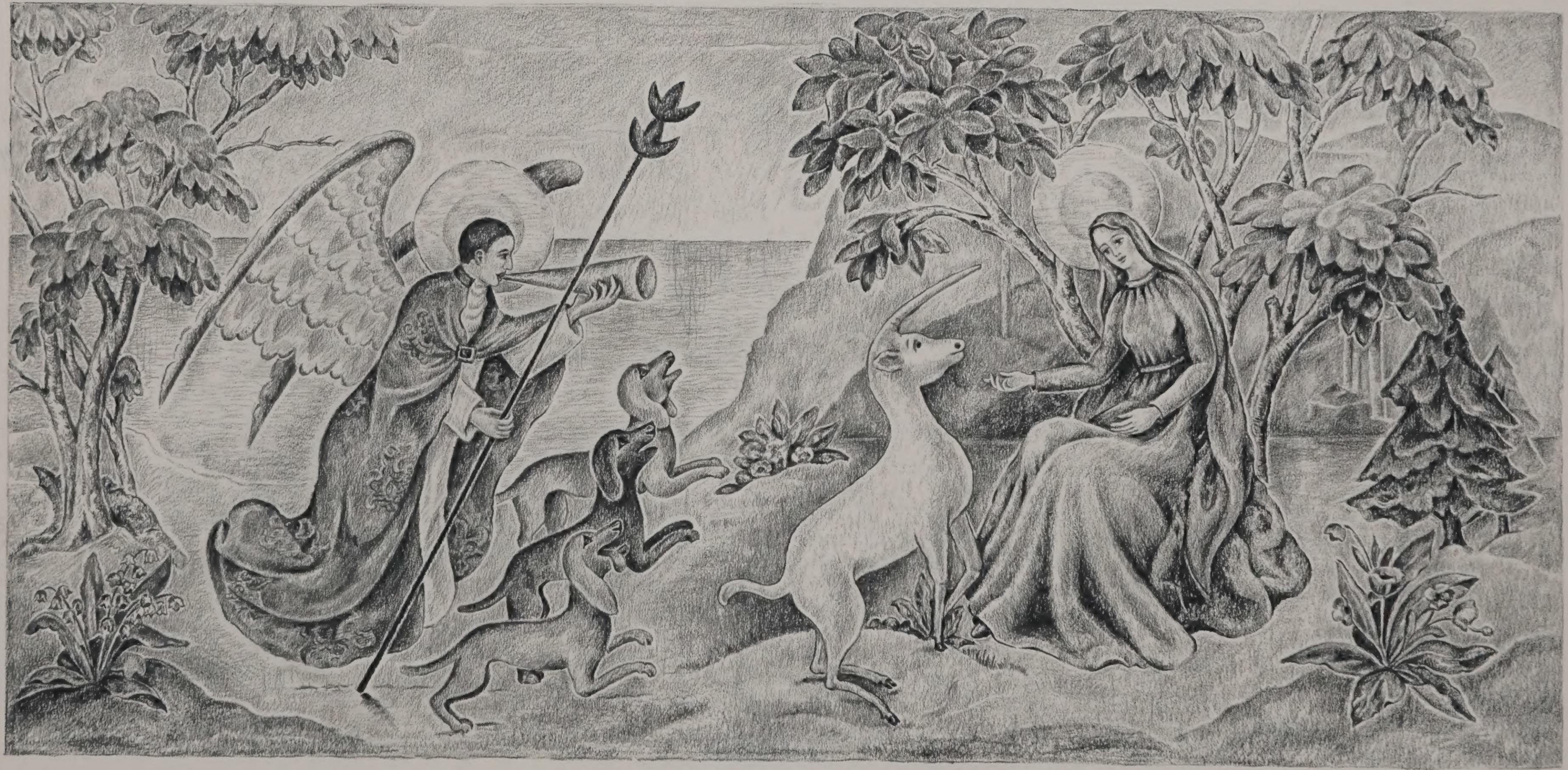
As we interpret the symbolism in our mural, Gabriel is engaged in a "Holy Hunt" sounding his horn, urging on his three hounds, Mercy, Truth and Justice, searching the forests of the universe for one without sin. At last he comes upon the unicorn, hidden from the world, white and pure without blemish, with but one horn, symbolizing his unity with the one God. Forever evading and eluding man, the unicorn comes to the Virgin Mary without fear, sensing in her the same attributes of purity and chastity which he possesses. He gives to her the Christ idea, preparing her for Gabriel's message, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. . . ."

In our design the Virgin Mary is shown at the base of a clump of trees (our birch trees of Björklunden). Trees are symbols of faith, and Mary, in her foreboding, needed all the sustaining faith that could be given, for she was troubled and hid these things in her heart. The water in the background symbolizes the "Living waters," whose source is in God, and, flowing through the Virgin Mary into the life of Jesus Christ, was to give life more abundantly to the whole world. The mountains are mighty symbols of the Church founded on Christ, their spires reaching to the skies connect heaven and earth. The flowers in the foreground symbolize the tender beauty of the Virgin.

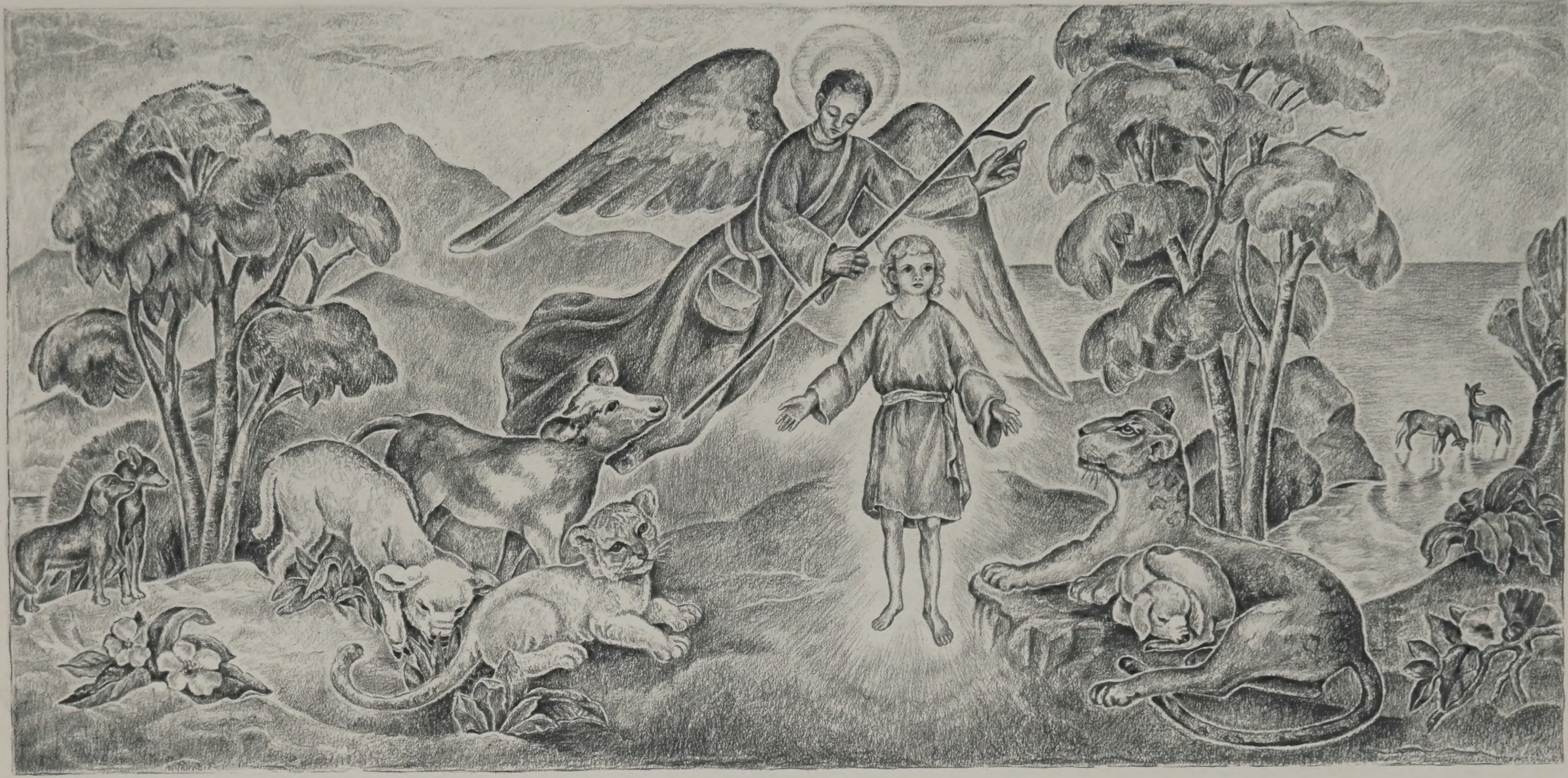
Now appeared a new challenge. With this panel completed, the subject for a companion design on the opposite wall of the north transept must be developed. The vague hope still lingered that in some way one of the other Archangels could be used. The original research material seemed to lack inspiration, but I went back over it again. Uriel, the interpreter of prophesy, yielded no thought for a design; Michael, "chief of the celestial host, when angels warred with angels in heaven," might have seemed appropriate now that the present war filled our minds and hearts during every waking hour, but it was *peace* that we sought. There remained then, Raphael. . . .

Memory had associated Raphael with the young Tobias carrying a fish. Further research disclosed him to be guardian saint of humanity, the angel commissioned to put down evil and to heal the ills of the earth. Translated literally from the Hebrew, Raphael means "God heals." Surely, today's suffering world needs to find the healing source of this power.

With Raphael in mind I reread "The Peaceable Kingdom" as described in Isaiah and found it might have been written for our day, so true it is of existing times. The people were described as those "that walked in darkness" and "dwelt in the land of the shadow of death." But at last, they saw a "great light" and "upon them hath the light shined," . . . "for unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given . . . and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor . . . the Prince of *Peace.*" "And it shall come to pass in that day (when the Prince of Peace shall reign) that the burdens shall be lifted from off their shoulders, the yoke from off their neck, and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon



The Holy Hunt



The Peaceable Kingdom

them, . . . the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord." Then the "leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fattling together; and a little Child shall lead them" . . . "and nothing shall be hurt or destroyed in all God's holy mountain for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." With this divine knowledge, all nations as all creatures, can live together in peace. Here is our hope and our promise!

Thrilled and grateful to have found so fitting a subject for this mural I began work at once including as much of this thought as possible in the design, God's creatures, the holy mountains, trees, flowers and the waters of the sea and the little Child who leads us all. And because our two dogs, Paddle and Jigger, are also God's creatures, they were included in the panel!

Although this design was soon completed, the actual painting of this mural was delayed for six years. Before starting on this panel it seemed imperative for my own peace of mind to determine first the treatment of the other panels which still remained to be designed.

Summer was drawing to a close and it was time to turn our steps southward.

CHAPTER III

THIRD SUMMER

1941

Commit thy work unto the Lord, and thy
thoughts shall be established.

Proverbs 16:3

THE AWAKENING

WOODCARVING filled every spare moment that Winter. As each new article to be carved became more intricate in design it presented greater problems than we felt able to meet without the advice of an experienced teacher. We were fortunate in finding a master woodcarver from Denmark who had organized a class held each Monday night at a public school in a neighboring suburb.

I shall never forget the first night we arrived at this school with the back seat of our car loaded with lumber. We wanted to be ready for anything and started with our arms full, down the labyrinth of those corridors which the younger generation tread so knowingly — up and down, turn right, turn left, on and on through winding passages until finally, quite breathless, we found the Manual Training Department in the basement. Our teacher did not hide his smiles when he saw all we were prepared to do, but removed the lumber from our aching arms. He then gave each of us a small board of white pine. On this, we were to learn the theory of resistance, which is the beginning and the end of all true carving. We learned the necessity of equalizing the thrust of the right hand bearing the implement, by resisting with the left, an entirely new technique in our experience. And so during the next three weeks we did little else but carve a series of straight lines with a deep chisel.

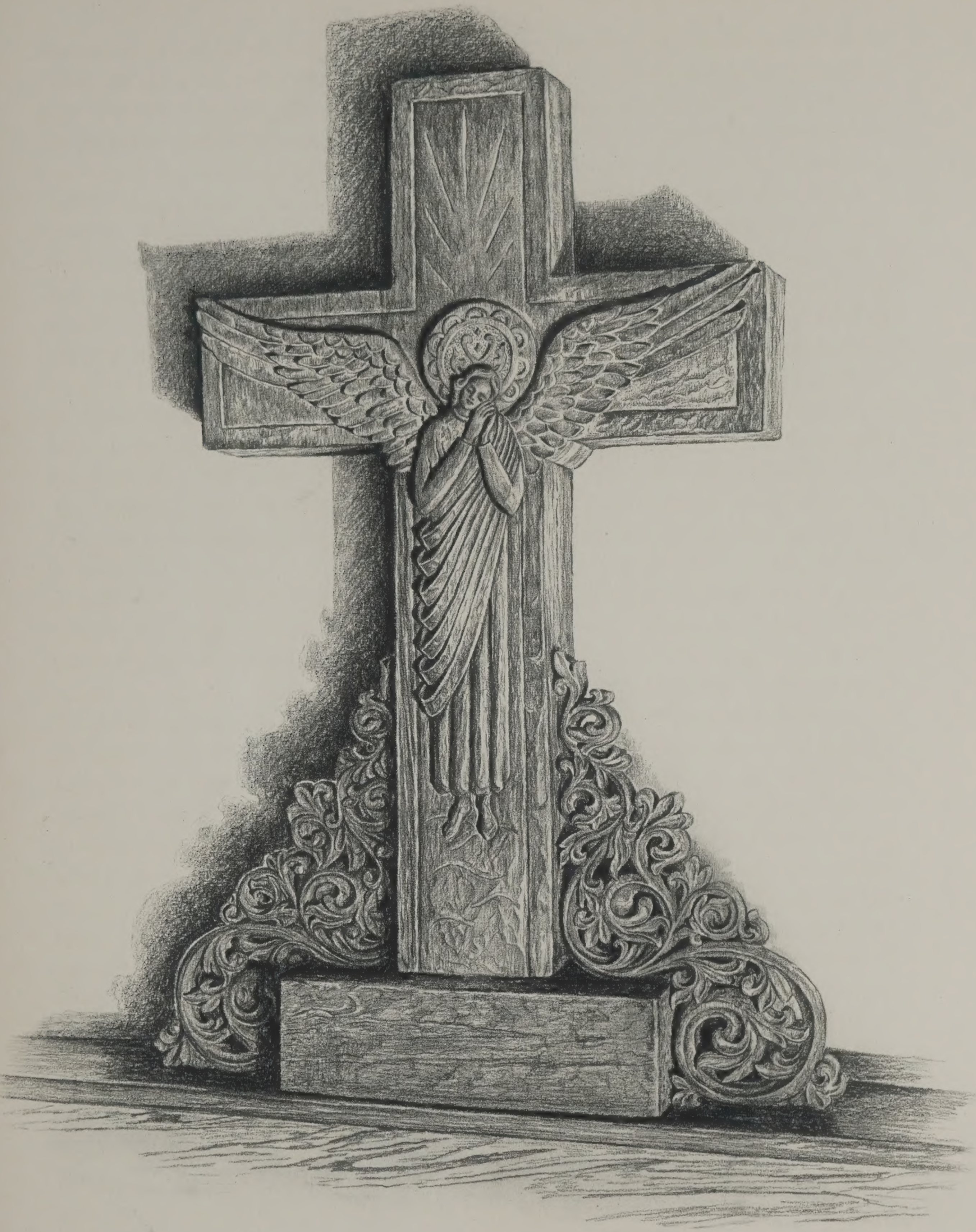
Before leaving Björklunden in the Fall we had decided on the size and proportion of the Pulpit and Altar. A high, three-cornered Pulpit with a ladder leading to it was authentic for this period. Designs were made with the center panel symbolizing Trinity, with three intertwined fish within a trefoil, each leaf and petal designed in thirds. The peacock panel to the left symbolizes Eternity and the doves in the right symbolize God.

The design for the Altar could not be considered by itself but must relate to the position in which it was located, and in this case, to the Cross which was placed on it. Together they make the most important unit in the Chapel. The treatment of the Cross, which had already been established, made it advisable to have the Altar as simple in line and detail as possible. When the height and depth had been determined, eight narrow vertical strips of paper with designs of grapevines were tacked into place in order to get the relation of one to the other.

And now, we were ready to carve these panels. As weeks passed our teacher seemed quite pleased with our progress and amazed at the amount of work accomplished. Don had devised an ingenious apparatus for sharpening our carving tools and had built a strong, firm carving-table in our basement with a long fluorescent light overhead. Thankless, mean jobs like the sharpening Don preferred to do and the fact that we succeeded in carving as well as we did was due to the razor-sharp edge he kept on all tools. On many occasions midnight found us still carving. It was easier for me to visualize form in carving, but Don, the meticulous mechanician, was far more careful. He would smooth out all the messy little corners I had left, finishing to perfection what I had begun. In this way we worked together with the same interest, supplementing each other in everything we did.

One stormy Winter's night, a few months later, when we had graduated from carving lines to the design of fish, we toted the Chapel Cross to our class. The Cross weighs forty pounds, and is three feet high and five inches thick and is made of laminated red gumwood. This had begun to warp and separate, and we wanted to consult our teacher about it. We waited after class to get his advice. By the time we were ready to leave, all lights were out along our now familiar route through the corridors, and we were let out the back door into a raging storm. The streets were a glare of ice. Don, bending and bracing himself against the wind and sleet, carried the heavy Cross on his shoulders. Following close behind, trying to keep my feet from slipping, I carried a suitcase of carving tools and the two wooden fish on which we had been working. We thought it safer to take the middle of the road as we plodded along. Soon the headlights of a car picked us up and we stepped to one side. The car passed, only to jam on the brakes and skid sideways, while heads popped out of the windows to look back at us. Suddenly we realized how strange we must look! They probably thought we belonged to some cult of the Penitentes far from their desert and lost in the storm!

The Cross is the keynote of the Chapel, the design of which was one of the first things to be established. It is necessary always to keep in the foreground our original conception of the Chapel as a Sanctuary of Peace, peace for the individual and peace for the world. We were trying to weave the fabric of this building with threads drawn from our hearts and minds into the warp of God and the woof of Peace. In order to establish this thought as the central theme of the Chapel, the Angel of Peace is placed on the face



of the Cross. The Cross itself symbolizes the Crucifixion, but on the Cross, the Angel soaring upward with folded hands and widespread wings symbolizes the Resurrection, the triumph of our Lord in Victory over all death. Peace comes to him who can look through suffering to the reality of joy; who can look beyond the agony of the Crucifixion to the reality of life eternal.

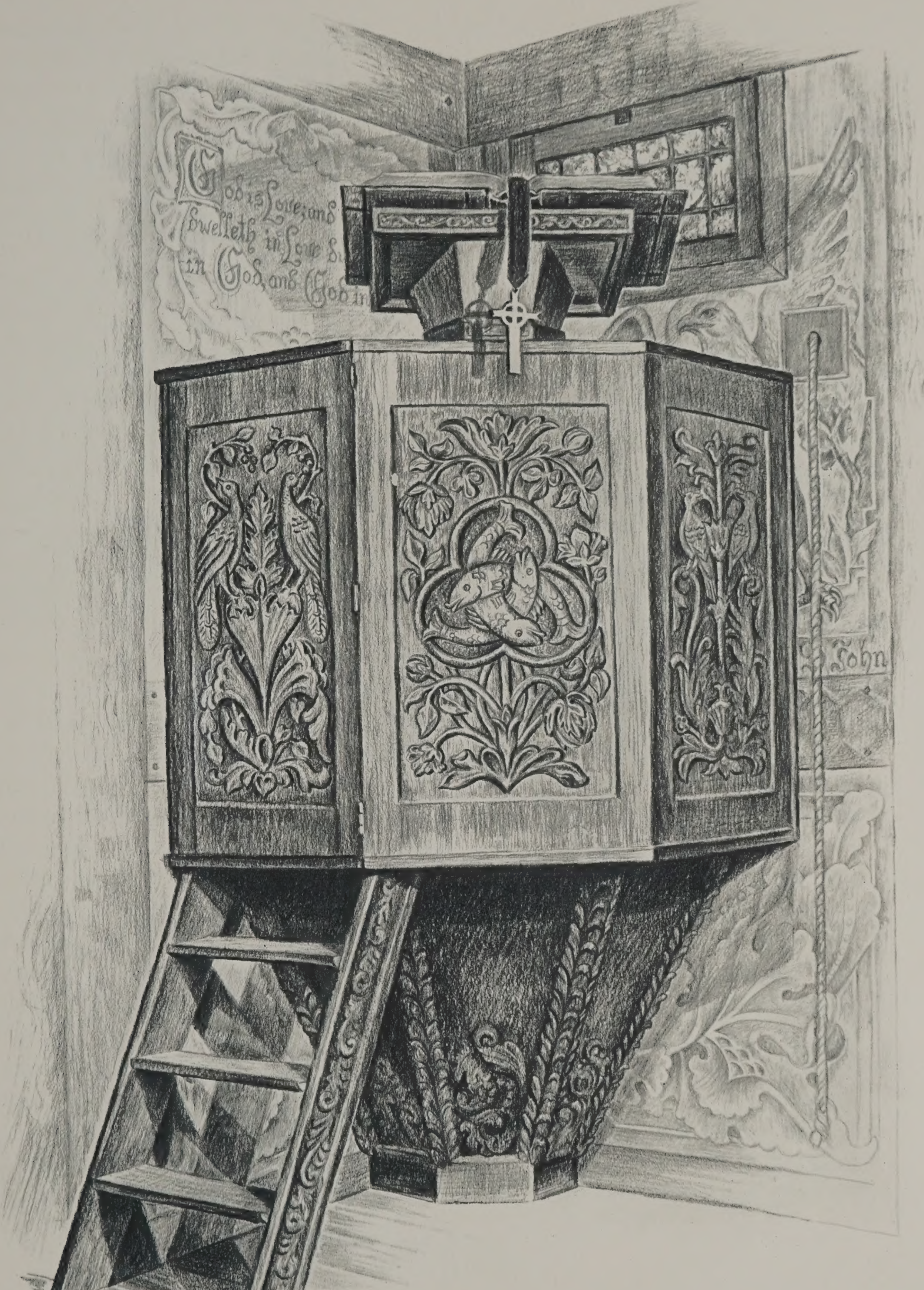
Some years later, a stranger, who was a minister, called to see the Chapel. He had heard only the day before that his son had been killed in the war, a fact at the time unknown to us. He stood so long in front of the Cross that I became uneasy. Finally I asked if he disapproved of placing an angel on the Cross in place of the crucified figure of Jesus Christ. "On the contrary," he said, "it is a most beautiful interpretation. To me it represents victory over death." This stranger had sensed at once the meaning of the Cross and had already received the Chapel's message of Peace.

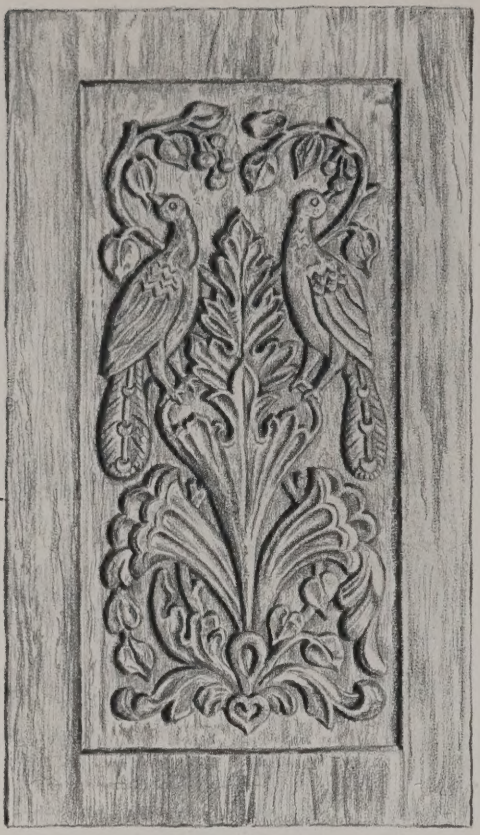
At last the time came when we felt ready to carve the Cross, a challenge which we were eager to undertake. It was surprising how rarely we used the clay model I had made as a guide. As soon as the angel was blocked out on the face of the Cross, the figure seemed actually to be in the wood itself and the carving uncovered what was already there. I was fascinated by this, my first effort in figure carving. As in painting, hands and faces were for me especially intriguing. An openwork scroll was designed for either side of the base of the Cross, the pattern being roughed out with a scroll-saw before carving.

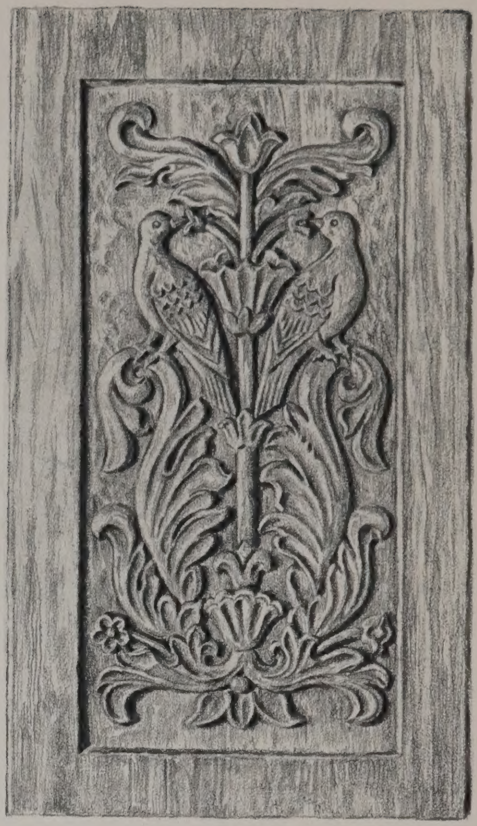
The work of that Winter was a never to be forgotten joy and when the time came to return to Björklunden that Spring, the Cross was completed and ready to take its place on the Altar of our little Chapel.

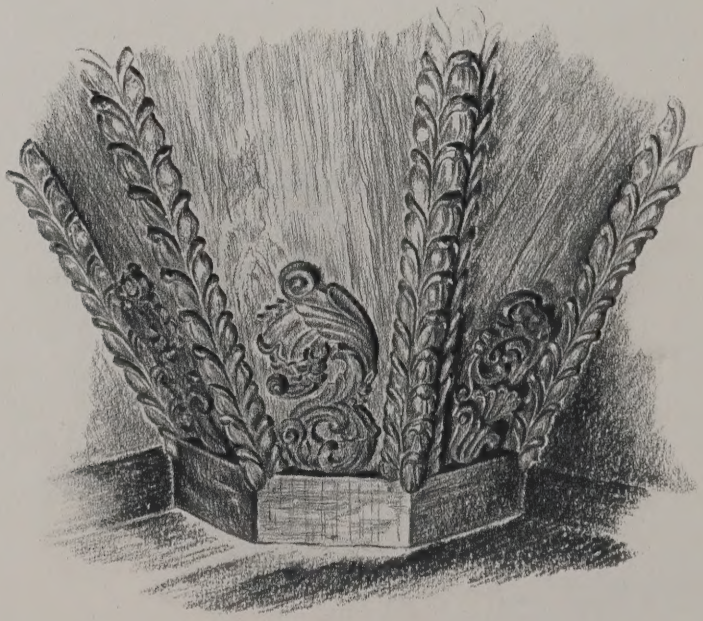
Again we were back at Björklunden! We like to be there in the Spring when everything that has lately seemed dead bursts again into life; to see the buds appear and the cherry blossoms come into bloom. Only wild cherries grow on our property, but we love their delicate, fragrant flowering and the feathery bloom of the shadbush. Trilliums, grouped in clusters, lift their triangular faces from under the protecting arms of pines and balsam. Even the trees of the forest seem to bloom. The birches are covered with myriads of yellow blossoms and the maples with little flower-like umbrellas. The pine trees too, wear the fresh costume of Spring. Each new green shoot dons a wee brown Easter bonnet. Millions of green shoots and millions of gay Easter bonnets! But alas, they are not worn for long! As the little shoots grow, the bonnets become too small and the wind whisks them off through the air. Birds dart here and there, busily preparing nests for the little ones that soon will come. The trails are so carpeted with strawberry blossoms, and with yellow and purple violets, that we pick our way carefully lest we step on them. Surrounded by this fresh beauty the Chapel stands peacefully.

One day soon after our return I was working in the Chapel when Mrs. Peil, one of our neighbors from Bailey's Harbor, peered in at the door and, with her broken German accent, asked anxiously, "Mrs. Boynton have you already yet forgot that we today the


God is Love; and
dwelleth in Love
in God, and God in
John







garden plant?" This was a yearly ritual, and with the family and any willing guests there was always Mrs. Peil.

No story of Björklunden would be complete without her. Before the carpenters moved out of the house, she, as mistress of our garden, moved in with trowel and spade. A strangely picturesque figure, wearing men's carpet slippers and a wide brimmed hat festooned with a faded scarf as protection from mosquitoes, she strides over the country. Miles mean nothing to her at the age of seventy-eight. I remember at the end of our first Summer at Björklunden she walked four miles to bring me the last unfrozen flowers from her garden. At the age of eighteen she was one of two emigrant girls who set out from a small town in Germany to find husbands promised at their journey's end. Arriving at the village of Bailey's Harbor they drew lots for the most eligible bachelor. Mrs. Peil lost! As second choice she married Mr. Peil and with the same indomitable spirit that characterized her whole life, she made the best of it. Besides helping with all the farm work she managed in fourteen years to have ten children. Credit for this, she assures us, should be given more to the patent medicine of "Peruna" than Mr. Peil. With a twinkle in her eye she says, "I need no man, just Peruna!" Her wrinkled face was radiant the other day when she said, "My whole life I give to make beautiful!" It could not be otherwise for the inner beauty of her spirit must find expression. I wish she and Isaiah could have talked together. Certainly they share the same ideas about gardens. Isaiah says, "Therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants." All Mrs. Peil's plants are pleasant and the joy she gets from growing things she gives out to her whole world.

Our garden adjoins the tennis court at some distance from the main buildings. A narrow railing tops the low stone wall that surrounds the garden which is edged by a long curving bed of perennials and annuals. In the center, the high fieldstone bird bath is flanked on either side with low formal beds of blue ageratum, red zinnias and yellow marigolds, the same colors as the trim of the buildings. The suits of the eight-inch trolls that sit on the garden gates and fish in the bird bath are also in these colors.

There are many legends portraying trolls as evil little people. Ours, called "Tomtar," are happy and good. Traditionally, peasant craftsmen of Scandinavia were wont to put their personal friends and relatives into their creative design. Following this custom we carved our "Tomtar" to represent some of our more intimate friends in characteristic poses. And we named the garden "Venligehave" which means "a garden of friends."

Deep sleep seems to have fallen on our friend who sits on the entrance gate. Tired and worn when he visits us, our main effort is to rest and fatten him. So we have represented him reposing contentedly here with red-capped head sunk on his chest, his clasped hands barely reaching across his fat stomach. Although he is missing all the golden butterflies that hover over the gayly colored flowers like a mist that settles and rises again; and he does not see the humming birds that hang poised above the swaying blossoms, we would not waken him.

Across the garden on the opposite gate is "Don," peering around the end of the post. From this vantage point he misses nothing that goes on in the garden.

Swinging their feet over the edge of the bird bath two more friends are fishing in the pool; their heart's desire granted . . . plenty of time to fish. And on the double gate, their knees tucked under their yellow whiskers, sit the twins!

A cedar hedge bordering the tennis court on the west has a gate on which another "Tomte," representing our friend Frank Knox, war-time Secretary of the United States Navy, is seen dashing across the top, "running for office!" There seems no doubt that he will eventually arrive! At midnight all these little "Tomtar" are said to leave their posts and play at will. This legend is too charming for me to question closely.

In Genesis it says, "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." Does it seem that He would not be walking in this garden so full of color, merriment and joy? You would think amiss if you so judged, for the flowers are but symbols of the rare qualities of these many friendships.

Don's mother must have had the same thoughts about her garden when she wrote . . .

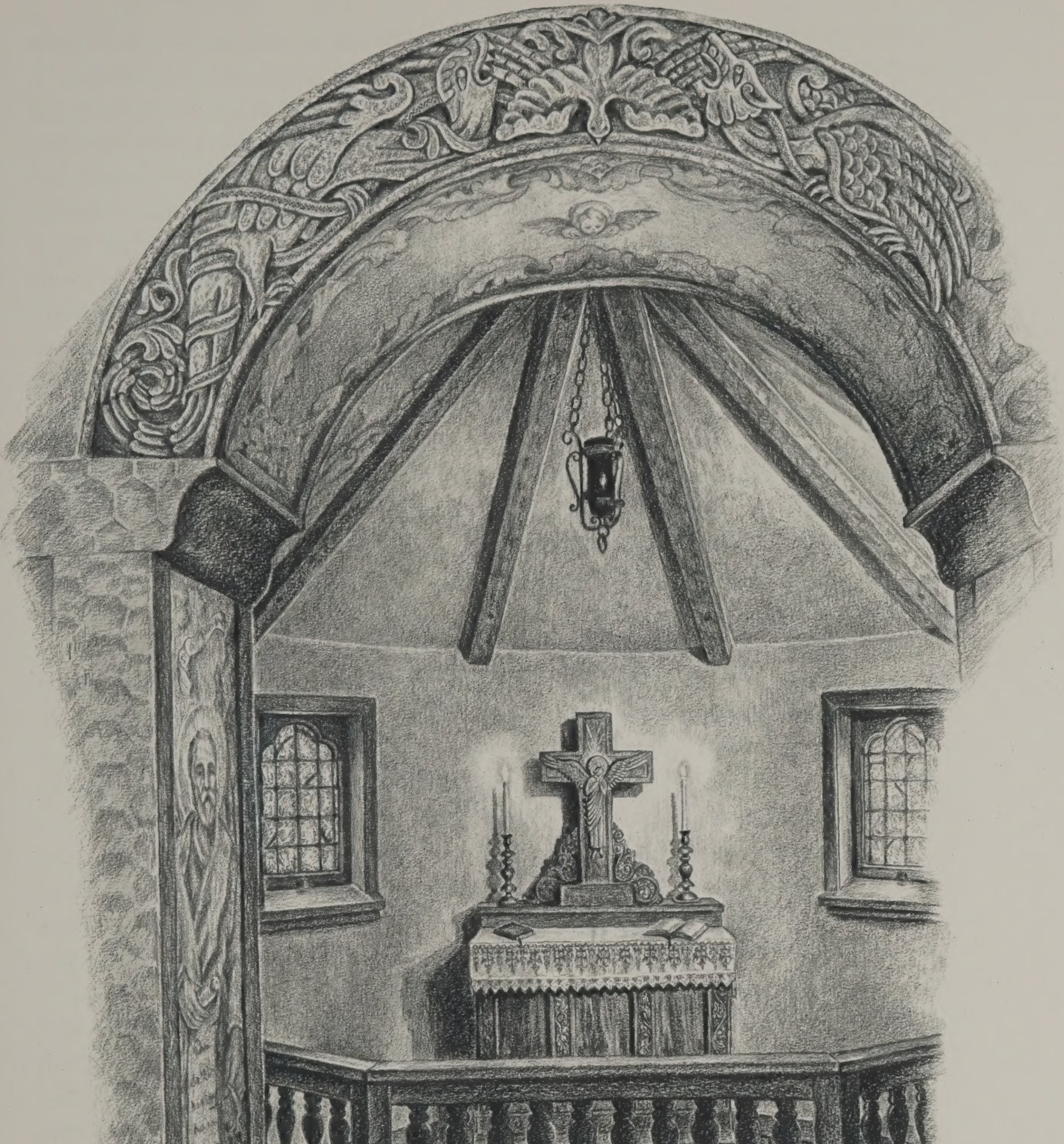
Sometimes in the stillness of the night,
I think I hear the footsteps of the Lord
Walking in my garden;
Steps as soft as falling dew.

In this stillness He speaks to my flowers:
If I do but listen truly,
I then know I hear Him say

"I am the Voice
I am the falling dew,
I am all that is;
I walk with you!"

My flowers, they bloom in praise of Him
Who in my garden walks.

With the garden planted I now turned to the work of the Chapel. Soon the Altar was completed with the grapevine panels which we had carved during the Winter. On this was laid an old Swedish Altar Cloth, and on the Fair Linen a design of wheat was embroidered thus combining the two symbols of Bread and Wine. There is a deep significance in these designs. In John we find, "I am the vine, ye are the branches. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye except ye abide in Me." It is at the Altar that the communion of Bread and Wine is made and it is here that we dedicate ourselves to live and walk in the Spirit. The Cross completed the first unit of the Chapel and thus another dream became a reality.



It was not long before we finished the twelve pew-ends and the question of how to stain them arose. The plain wood furniture of the house had been stained with a mixture of umber, white lead, linseed oil and turpentine. This was tried on samples of butternut, the wood used for the pew-ends, and it seemed satisfactory. Quite confident that no problem was involved here I stained the pew-ends and two carved arches. But alas, stain applied to carved wood is a very different matter from stain applied to a flat surface. The result was dismal! It was so dark that the design was completely lost. More sleepless nights followed, with the fearful conviction that everything would have to be carved over again. Discouraged but undaunted, we experimented with oxalic acid. With cautious applications, little by little we bleached out the dark stain and it was not necessary to do the carvings over. We were learning the hard way!

One night soon after this, with Walt and his wife as dinner guests, I had been telling my sorrowful tale of wood-stain when he interrupted with, "I know what you should use for finishing . . . sour cream . . . have you any? I will show you!" Some sour cream was produced and a pair of woolen golf stockings was used for polishing. We went to work. The whole room reeked of sour cream, but the finish was beautiful. With plenty of rubbing and buffing with the palm of the hand, the wood took on a soft and satiny patina. Each dinner guest was given a pew-end to buff. A novel evening's entertainment!

The two Chapel projects of woodcarving and murals went hand in hand and were ever present in my mind. The mural of the Archangel Gabriel was finished and seemed already to belong to the simple character of the Chapel. The design for the Archangel Raphael and the Peaceable Kingdom was ready to be traced on the wall prior to painting. There remained thirty-nine panels to be designed; twenty-three for the lower walls and sixteen for the upper, including the four ceiling panels.

Thomas á Kempis said, "Christ establishes us in God by making us think on such things as cause inward peace of soul." With the same thought in mind I selected, for six of the lower panels, scriptural passages suggesting and inviting communion with God. These, with two Gregorian Canticles, were to be set within decorative floral designs. Music having played so vital a part in the lives of all our family, surely, some definite representation of music should be included. It seemed, with the rhythmic movement of design developing in my mind, that the Chapel was already singing in my heart. With the help of a Latin dictionary, the Catholic Missal, and the early tenth century notations of Gregorian Chants, the following two canticles were chosen, "Gloria in excélsis Déo. Et in terra pax hóminibus bónae voluntátis." "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace to men of goodwill;" and "Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum pace . . ." "Now lettest Thou, Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word." The theme of peace moves through every panel in the Chapel!

The treatment for the lower panels seemed to be progressing satisfactorily but what of the upper ones? I recalled that many interiors in the old Scandinavian churches were completely covered with floral design. Perhaps the designs of the lower panels could be modified for the ceiling and upper panels as well. Many weeks were spent in developing this idea but when the colored drawings were tacked into place the result was disappointing. They were decorative, but that was all. It is interesting in looking back to realize that with each discarded idea there remained something of value to be used later. A little of the floral design was retained and used in every panel in the Chapel.

Another idea grew out of the desire to create a continuing and connecting rhythm in these upper panels by the repetition of the Roman arch used throughout the Chapel. Before long designs were made with cherubs holding up the arches, dodging underneath them playing hide-and-seek, tobogganing down the sides, waving to those sitting on the clouds—a galaxy of joyful, carefree children. It took quite a time to learn how to draw them, their faces and bodies are proportioned so differently from those of adults. At first they all looked like small editions of Herbert Hoover and Winston Churchill before war and anxiety had drawn deep lines of determination on the faces of these statesmen. Eventually, my happy little babies became quite life-like; but again, having completed the designs, I knew they were not the answer. They lacked spiritual depth and somewhat reluctantly I discarded the cherubs retaining, however, the idea of the connecting arches.

The Chapel itself revealed the next step which led, at last, to the journey's end! On either side of the Nave, above the massive horizontal beams that separate the lower and upper panels, there is a narrow strip of plaster about nine inches wide, intersected at intervals by perpendicular beams from the ceiling. Some special treatment was required for this strip. Conventional, border-like patterns had been tried but were not satisfactory. Suddenly it became clear that this was just the place for scriptural passages which could be illustrated in the designs of the panels above (panels about 4 feet by 4½ feet).

Quietly and simply the ideas began to unfold. The heart of the Chapel is peace. Peace is God within us and flows through the channel of prayer. Withdrawing from the visible world in order to realize the invisible; prayer attunes us to God and His divine power. The Lord's Prayer is the universal prayer and peace is the universal need. Each step was logically manifested. In the large panel (10½ feet by 5 feet) over the arch separating the Nave and Chancel angels could be shown in prayerful attitudes and on a narrow scroll the beginning of the Lord's Prayer would be written. The other nine panels, still interpreting the thoughts within this majestic prayer, would suggest the means of attaining peace through humility, wisdom, trust, love and faith. The little prayer of St. Francis of Assisi was influencing and guiding my thought.

> Lord make me an instrument of your peace,
> Where there is hatred let me sow love;
> Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.

The idea was established and the weeks and months of struggle ended. In all the years that followed there has never been any doubt or regret that this selection was made. With every succeeding year the interpretive meaning of each panel grows in depth and significance, and will, I am sure, continue to grow in years to come.

To develop this idea was such a vast undertaking that I did not look beyond it, nor did I question that when the time came the right answer to each problem would be found. Already I was beginning to put into practice the meaning of trust and faith and with the resulting peace of mind the work ahead would be thrilling and inspiring.

Fall and the time for returning home came all too soon, but we looked forward eagerly to the woodcarving projects planned for the Winter.

In the midst of this absorbing work and the thoughts of the Chapel's peace came the shattering news of Pearl Harbor. At that time our oldest daughter, Edith, was teaching music in Honolulu and until we received her reassuring cable our anxiety was great. When, soon after, our two sons enlisted, we as parents became part of this terrible war and were unified with those throughout the world whose sons and daughters were going to meet danger. With them we must learn to walk with fear and to live above it.

CHAPTER IV

FOURTH SUMMER

1942

For evil appeareth . . . prepare ye war against her.

Jeremiah 6:1, 4

VISIONS

EACH of us in his way was preparing for war, giving to this preparedness the best he had to offer, and finding new strength and new courage in giving. Could the combined Axis powers be broken before they reached our shores? Underneath was this ever-present uncertainty. We knew what could happen for we had seen the futile death struggles of so many unprepared nations. Underneath everything stalked fear; fear of what *might* happen.

During that Winter our woodcarving became the gyroscope that stabilized our lives. Heretofore we had worked to achieve something in carving. Now, reversing the order, it worked to achieve something in us. At night Don and I would go down into our workshop and lose the anxieties of the day. The load would be lifted from our hearts in this absorbing interest.

However, even such engrossing work must be set aside for important family events. The graduation of our youngest daughter, Zanne, from Sarah Lawrence in June took us East and while in New York we visited the Cloisters. There, because of our newly acquired interest in the art of painting on plaster, our attention became centered on an old Spanish fresco of the thirteenth century. The lion in this mural, unknown to us at the time, was to suggest the treatment of four more Chapel panels. Unconsciously ideas entered our minds to appear later in some new form that seemed little related to the original. No one seeing the panel of our Winged Lion, symbolizing St. Mark, could recognize any resemblance to the Spanish fresco of the Cloisters.

Returning home we entered into the happy preparations preceding the marriage of our son Ted. One day last Summer he had announced, "Well, I've found the girl I want to marry!" And, as though that was not startling enough he added, "She's Norwegian!" *"Norwegian!"* we all shouted. "Her father and mother are," said Ted, "and her grandfather was one of Norway's famous woodcarvers!" Could anything be more fitting? Is it you, Hrolff, that we should thank for all these blessings? We welcomed the entire family with open arms. They, too, are musical and the rafters ring when we gather around the festive board. They have taught us an old custom, that of singing the blessing both before and after meals . . .

Before meals:
I Jesu navn går vi til bords,
In Jesus' name go we to board,

at spise å drikke på dit ord,
to eat and drink on Thy word,

Dig, Gud til ere, oss til gavn,
Thee, God, to honor, us to good,

sa får vi mat i Jesu navn. Amen.
so get we food in Jesus' name. Amen.

After meals:
I Jesu navn til bords vi sat,
In Jesus' name to board we sat,

A fik av Herrens hånd vor mat,
and got of (the) Lord's hand our food,

Til gavn for lege, å for sjel,
to good for body and for soul,

Gud lat oss det bekomme vel. Amen.
God let us it become well. Amen.

Ted and his bride spent their honeymoon at Björklunden. This had become a family tradition. Five years before our daughter, Peggy, had asked to be married there. She had wanted the simplest of weddings. No fuss and feathers for Peggy! The young Bailey's Harbor minister and his wife came for dinner and afterwards, gathered around the glowing fire, the ceremony quietly took place. Then, reversing the usual procedure, the happy couple waved good-bye to the departing family and guests! It was the same when our daughter, Donna, was married a few years later. On that occasion the big living room became again the "Great Hall" of the Vikings. High candelabra were placed either side of the large gray wolf rug which lay in front of the massive stone fireplace where the bridal couple were to stand. The flickering candles made small points of light against the deep shadows within the room.

Family and friends waited expectantly and all eyes turned quickly at the sound of an opening door above. There was an audible gasp as Donna moved across the balcony. Was she too, part of a vision of the past? Against the vivid mural on the wall she seemed to float in the white mist of her veil and her copper-colored hair made a burnished halo around her head. Björklunden is full of these precious memories.

At last we were back at work in the Chapel. During the Winter, designs for the larger panels of "Angels of Prayer" and "Angels of Praise" had been made and had been sent to Walt for criticism. He had advised several changes but there had been no time to put them into effect. Fortunately for us, he was free that Summer and suggested he spend such time as was necessary to help me in organizing the designs. Hour after hour and day after day we worked together. It proved not so simple as we had thought.

The Studio became our workshop. The entire east wall was covered with large panels of plywood. Small designs made to scale were later enlarged on paper to the exact size of each panel in the Chapel. These were tacked to the plywood, and on them we worked, designing, erasing and redesigning. When they had been colored with chalk, to get the final effect, they were placed in the Chapel panels where they were eventually to be painted.

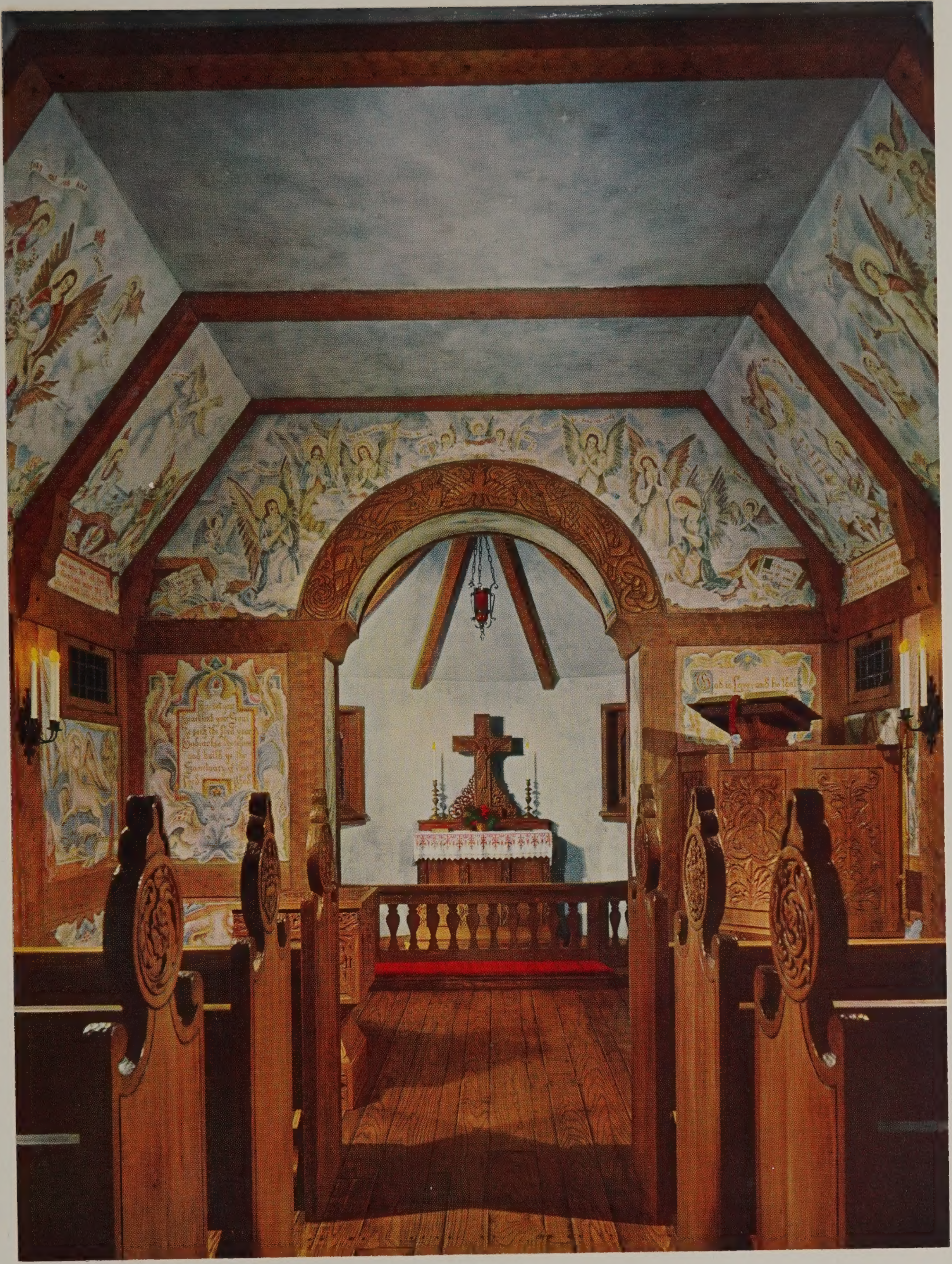
During this experimental stage, I climbed up and down ladders literally hundreds of times putting up temporary designs. The ladders were very shaky and the planks stretching between were very springy. This activity did not please Don, who made a few comments on my status as a gray-haired grandmother, and my lack of ordinary caution, then he quietly went to work and built a most spacious and commodious platform on casters which could be moved easily wherever one wished. This nearly filled the Chapel and looked not unlike the movable platforms used in Lincoln Park to replace bulbs in the tall lamp posts along the Boulevard. There was a railing around the top so that in viewing my work I would not forget and step off into space. Nothing was overlooked! When the time came for painting, stools of varying heights, a small painting table, paints, brushes, plaster, pails of water and reference books were placed on this platform. Here I did everything but sleep during the next four Summers.

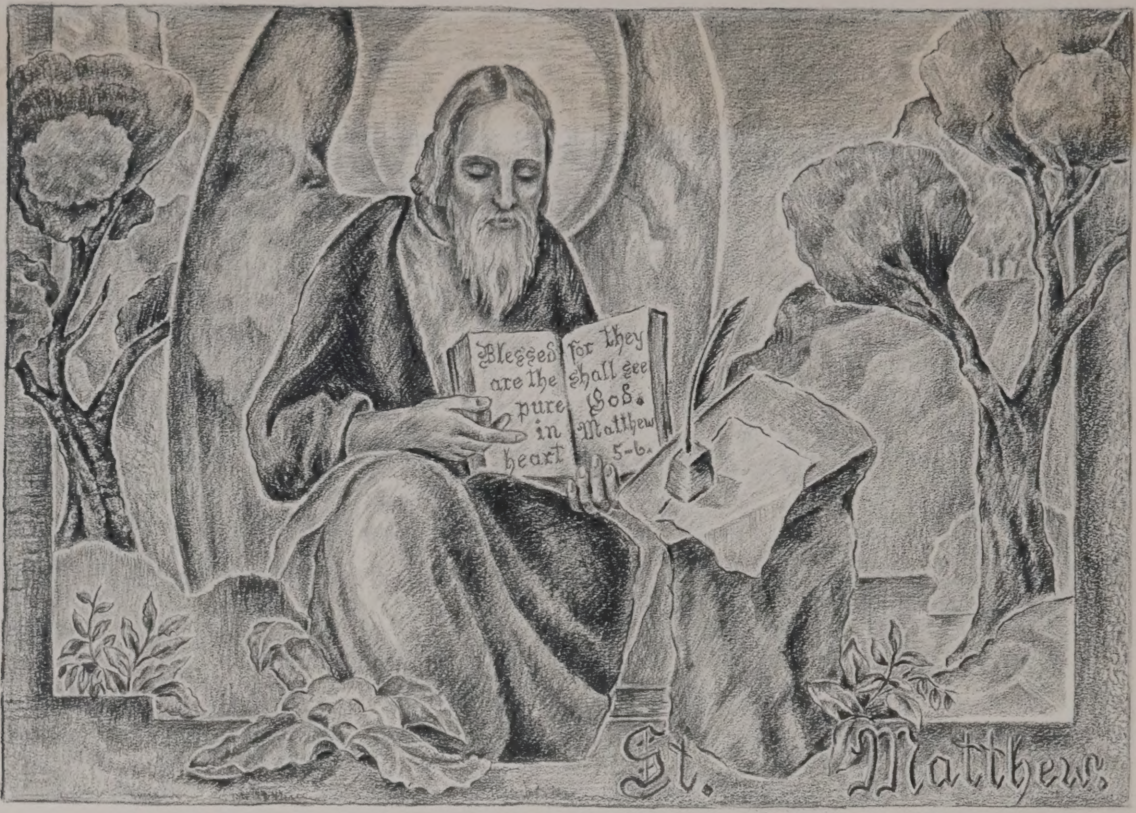
In working out our designs it seemed wise to begin with the simpler ones for the lower panels using the acanthus leaf, symbol of Holy gardens, as a decorative frame for the lettering of the Scriptural passages. With the completion of these we turned to the more difficult upper panels where we were to interpret, with Biblical passages, the attributes of peace as related to the Lord's Prayer. Not only must these passages be suitable in meaning but they must fit the limited space available for them. It seemed most desirable to have a unity of thought expressed in each panel; first, through the Scripture, then through the angelic figures and lastly through the symbol within the emblem at the bottom of the design. There was an effort to interpret all passages of Scripture in such a manner that they might express not only our truest and deepest thoughts, but that they would call forth in the consciousness of others, an even deeper interpretation. There are no visual limitations to spiritual horizons.

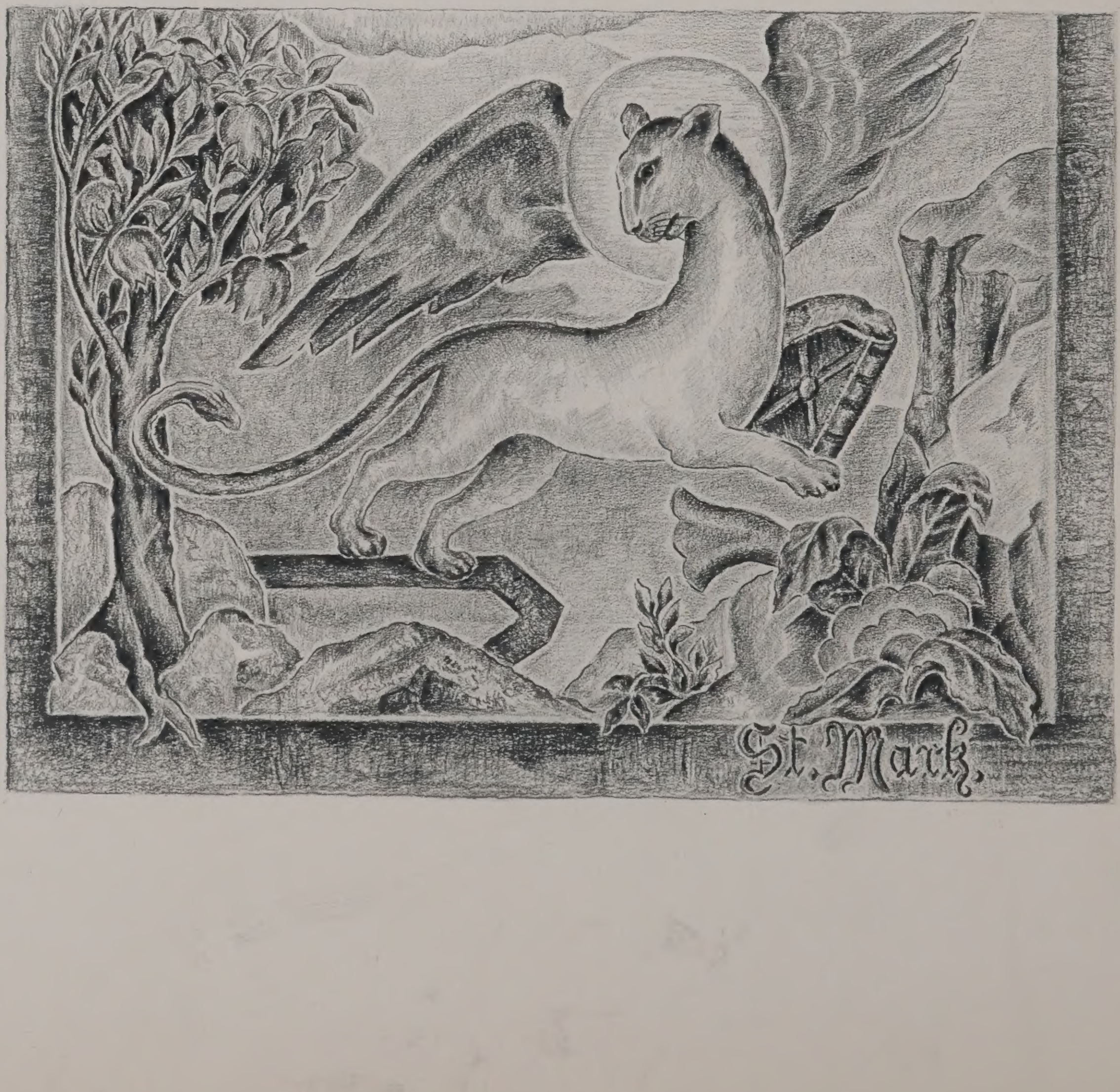
Research was my special department. The desks and tables in the Studio were stacked with reference books covering a wide range of religion, art, symbolism, birds, flowers and animals. Our two volumes of El Greco became so thumb-worn that the bindings gave way. Manual work can be done with a certain number of interruptions but ideas have to develop in quiet. For me, this came only between dawn and the family breakfast hour. There were no distractions to disturb the stillness that was everywhere. In semi-darkness I would steal over to the Studio with my small coffee percolator, and soon the coffee would be bubbling and the fire crackling and my work would begin. As the earth, shrouded in darkness, waits expectantly for the light of a new day, so I waited for the dawning of an idea. Sometimes it came slowly and hesitantly and then again it dawned full-orbed, as the sun hidden behind a bank of dark clouds appears suddenly, flooding the world with light. In this way, during these early hours, ideas for each panel were worked out and ready for further development into design by the time Walt arrived.

The keynote of the first panel was to be a dove. We had difficulty in recalling the feathered details of this bird. Pictures in our books showed them with their feet lowered and also stretched out straight behind. "Yes, yes," said Walt, "I remember that only when they are angry, excited, mating, about to light or take off, do they lower their feet; otherwise they keep them tight to their bodies, like this . . ." Then putting his plump, brown hands flatly under his round stomach he illustrated this point. He did not in the least resemble a dove, but I shall never forget where that bird keeps its feet. It was soon evident, however, that it was necessary to know more about the anatomy of a dove than just its feet. After many redrawings it looked more like a large Canadian goose than a dove. Even after considerably reducing its size, we knew it still lacked something when a true sportsman came into the Studio and said, "What kind of a *duck* is that?"

While working on this bird we became conscious of the flight of other birds. Gulls were a special delight to watch as they glided swiftly through the air, sometimes singly, and again in perfect massed formation. Don and I found that dusk is the fishing hour of these gulls, and this was the time when, with the day's work finished, we liked to go to the lake's edge for a brief rest before dinner. We could hear the quiet sound of the bell-buoy visible far out toward the horizon, and we could see the sandpipers skimming swiftly a few inches above the water, their delicate shadows reflected below seeming to race with them back and forth. The setting sun would catch the underside of the gulls' bodies and set them alight as they glided with motionless wings through the air. Sud-


God is Love and he that


Blessed are the pure in heart
for they shall see God. Matthew 5-6.
St. Matthew.


St. Mark.

denly one of the birds would plummet into the water sending up a glistening spray and rise with a dripping, wriggling fish in its beak. Once, when we thought we were alone watching the skill of these graceful birds, one of the eagles that had ruled over the bird kingdom on our property for generations, swooped down on the gull. In terror it darted from under the eagle's wings, dropping the fish in flight. The eagle caught the fish in mid-air, and with a slow measured flapping of its wings flew away into the distance. We had witnessed as neat an example of hijacking as was ever perpetrated.

As fast as we finished the colored paper designs they were tacked upon the walls of the Chapel for further study. Many a design that had seemed satisfactory in the Studio turned out a complete failure in the Chapel because it lacked the continuing rhythm of line and balance that related it to the adjoining panel. As more and more of these designs were fastened to the wall they began to give some indication of what the final effect would be when the Chapel was completed.

Our next concern was the subject matter for the four corners of the Nave which stared blankly at us. One day, looking at the Unicorn in the painting of our "Holy Hunt" Walt said, "Are there any other animals we could use?" My mind flashed back to the lion of the Spanish fresco in the New York Cloisters and still further back to the time of my childhood when I used to repeat the prayer of . . .

"Matthew, Mark, Luke and John
Guard the bed that I lie on
Four corners to my bed,
Four angels there aspread, . . ."

That was all I could remember, but it was enough! I knew the symbols of the Evangelists were the Winged Lion for Mark, the Winged Ox for Luke, the Eagle for John, and the Man with Wings for Matthew. In further research I found many conflicting opinions of the origin of these symbols. The most consistent approach seemed quite unrelated to the human aspects of the four Evangelists but as based on the content of the opening of each Gospel.

Matthew is symbolized as the Winged Man. His Gospel opening with the genealogy of the house of David, represents the human aspects in the life of Jesus Christ.

Mark's symbol is the Winged Lion. In the beginning of his Gospel it mentions "the voice of one crying in the wilderness; 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord!' " The voice of the lion represents the voice of God. This symbolism is carried even further if we relate it to the ancient belief that the lion cub is born dead but after three days comes to life, thus symbolizing the Resurrection.

The Gospel of Luke begins with a description of a certain priest sacrificing before the Altar in the Temple. The ox was both the sacrificial animal and also the one that served the needs of man. This suggests the double symbolism of the sacrificial death of Jesus

Christ and His ministry to the spiritual life of man, and perhaps relating the latter to Luke's ministering to the physical life of man through his profession as a physician.

The Gospel of John, soaring above human life, opens with the spiritual representation of Jesus Christ as the "Word" and the "Light." John, therefore, is symbolized by the eagle, rising above the human to the divine nature of Jesus Christ. The four corners of the Chapel were waiting and it was not long before the designs were ready to be painted.

It is difficult when work becomes so absorbing not to push it too hard. Like Job, I found that "When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? And I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day." So were my dreams, mazes of lines and curves through which I struggled desperately until dawn, when I could go to the Studio. It was marketing, housekeeping, the cheerful demands of a large healthy family that broke the rhythm of work and "helped unbend my too tense thought." It was one of those days, when, returning from market, at the point where the narrow shore road lifts to meet the main one, that I saw the familiar figure of Mrs. Peil. She was bending over to pick up some leaves in her usual jack-knife position. Because she needed both hands for her work, she had tucked between her legs in the rear, a long spray of leaves which waved in the breeze like a gay-plumed rooster's tail. Her face was aglow as I drew up beside her. "Is it not beautiful?" she asked, taking the leaves in her hands. "To you I give it. It is the Tree of Heaven! I will plant for you one!" I did not have time to ask how it came by this important appellation because a car began to honk behind me. But now, Mrs. Peil's Tree of Heaven is growing right beside our Chapel at Björklunden!

We had an important visitor toward the end of that Summer. The Swedish Consul from Chicago and his family came again to see us. At that time there had been rumors that the Chapel in Lillehammer, the very one we had used as a model for our Chapel, had been destroyed when the Germans first bombed Norway. "If this is true," he said, "your Chapel is one of the few remaining examples of this type of architecture." My mind was haunted by the significance of this possibility. Was the urge to build this type of Chapel part of the immortality of architecture . . . that with death and destruction in the Old World there might be a continuation of life in the New? This uncertainty seemed to bring an added purpose to our work. There was great comfort in the thought that in a world of destruction we were building, building with spiritual material as well as wood and stone. We were planting seeds of lasting peace during this time of war. It is then that laborers are many and the harvest of longing is plenteous. There is no drought in war, for the tears of the sorrowing world flow in a continuous stream. Would that seeds planted now could send down roots strong enough to survive the dryness of subsequent years when the longing is past and the laborers few!

CHAPTER V

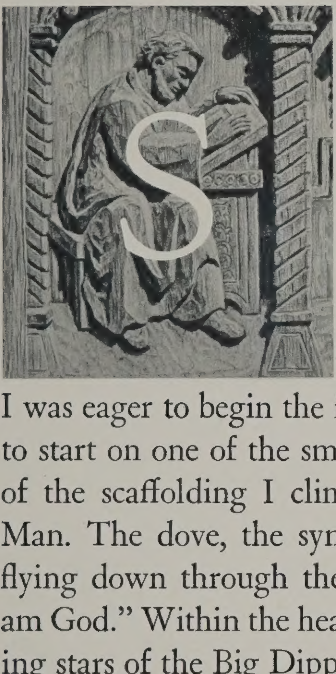
FIFTH SUMMER

1943

Comfort your hearts, and stablish you
in every good word and work.

II Thessalonians 2:17

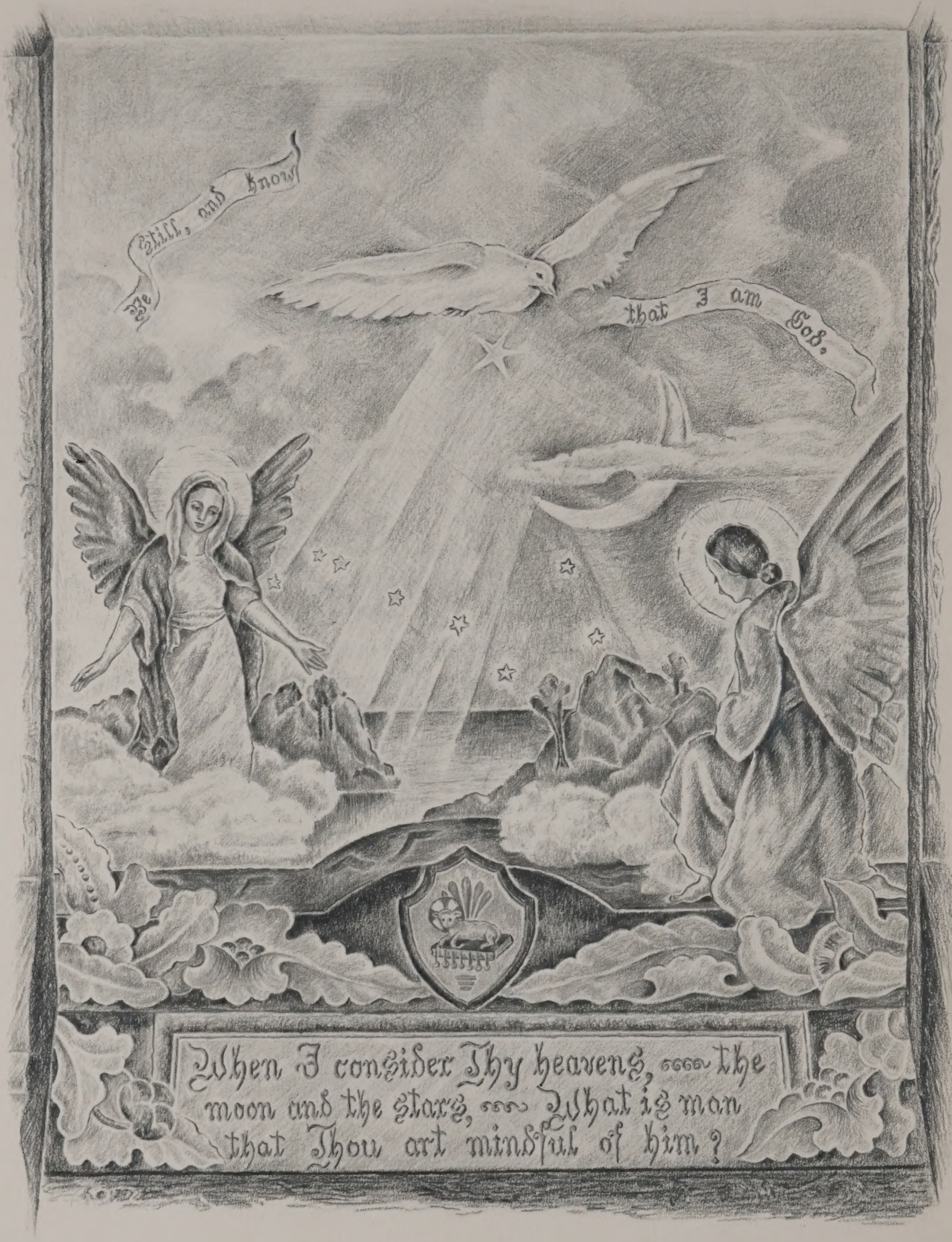
COMFORT THROUGH TOIL



Spring blossomed without us that year at Björklunden. The swelling buds of the maples and birches opened into full leaf; birds built their nests and small speckled eggs burst with new life. The wild strawberries returned their rich, red juice to the earth without our tasting of their delicious fragrance. Our children had been there in our absence but now July had come and it was time for us to take over.

At last the day came to begin painting on the Chapel walls, the designs completed during the last three years. Although I was eager to begin the important one of the "Angels of Prayer" wisdom cautioned me to start on one of the smaller ones. With all my equipment assembled on the platform of the scaffolding I climbed the ladder and started the panel representing God and Man. The dove, the symbol of God whenever used in the Chapel designs, is shown flying down through the clouds; the narrow scroll reads "Be still, and know that I am God." Within the heavens the North Star, fixed and constant, shines near the revolving stars of the Big Dipper. The light coming from above symbolizes the Light of God's spirit which is reflected in the calm, still waters below. The two figures are shown in attitudes of humility and within the emblem, the lamb symbolizes our Lord and also repeats the symbol of humility. The entire panel interprets the passage placed beneath the design . . . "When I consider Thy heavens . . . the moon and the stars . . . what is man that Thou art mindful of him?"

Our search for God begins with inner stillness . . . "When thou standest still from the thinking and willing of self, then the eternal hearing, seeing and speaking will be


Be still, and know
that I am God.
When I consider Thy heavens, the
moon and the stars, What is man
that Thou art mindful of him?

revealed in thee." Following the tasks God has set for us to do, working steadfastly through trials and suffering we learn in our own experience who God is.

The work on this mural during the following weeks was to teach me how to find the core of stillness which is the center of every storm, be it wind, water, or life. At first only through intense effort was anything accomplished, every idea was born with labor pains. Each line and variation in shade and color was questioned and tested again and again until gradually the time came when I lost the awareness of self; self-emptied I became the channel through which God could work.

This design, the first of the upper ten panels interpreting Scriptural passages, relates also to the Lord's Prayer. With the knowledge of the universal kinship of God and Man the meaning of the little word "our" Father, not "My" Father, is made clear. As a falling pebble sends its ripples to the distant shore, so the meaning of this little word "our" reaches out to include all the human family who claim God in this relationship.

One day while I was working on this panel Walt came over to see how things were progressing. Although he did no painting of the designs on the walls of the Chapel, nevertheless he was deeply interested in all the problems I was trying to solve and now suggested the ceiling be sprayed with color before going further with the side panels. Of course he was right! I had forgotten the ceiling in my eagerness to paint the walls. There are four flat ceiling panels (about 10 feet long by 4 feet wide) which were to be a continuation of the sky behind the figures in the upper wall panels. He volunteered to help—and what a job it proved to be! I could never have done it without him. We borrowed a spray-gun from a Bailey's Harbor painter, but its motor would not work. So we borrowed a motor from the garage owner whose spray-gun was broken, but even with the best of both we had constant trouble at just the wrong moments. After spraying two panels, we rested for a day to unkink the muscles of our necks and see what effect had been created by spraying one color on top of another. The tonal quality was satisfactory but the scars, that were caused by the roughness of the plaster, were so distinct in pattern they took away any resemblance to the heavens above. The only thing to do was to sand off the paint on the two finished panels and smooth out the roughness on all of them.

For thirteen days we took turns holding over our heads an enormous electric sander weighing fifteen pounds. This revolving disc turned at a terrific speed and plaster dust filled our eyes and lungs. It was very hot just under the ceiling and any glasses we tried to wear were soon completely clouded with moisture. We tied damp pieces of cheesecloth over heads and noses. Only Dali, himself, could have made two human beings look as we did! I do not ever remember doing such exhausting work. Our arms ached and our eyes smarted. After a total of seventeen days we finished sanding and spraying the ceiling. Stars of three magnitudes were then painted in their correct position in our heavens. "Thus, the heavens . . . were finished!" We climbed down the ladder from the scaffolding to view the results of our labors from below. As we looked, the colors shifted and deepened and we realized with great satisfaction that the sun, passing behind a cloud in the outer heavens, had changed the color values of ours in the Chapel as well. We could not ask for more!

It was on one of these days that Walt arrived wearing a brand new pair of shoes. It took only a few moments with a spray-gun to show that the shine would not last long. This threatened to be a major calamity! His best pair of shoes must be protected. I remembered a huge pair of Don's woolen golf stockings left from the days of plus-fours. These slipped easily over Walt's shoes and we climbed back on the scaffolding and resumed spraying. Suddenly Walt stopped and I saw a startled look on his face. He had heard, from far off, Don's voice calling for help! I knew he had gone to trim trees and my heart stood still. We were down the ladder in a moment, out on the run, listening to catch the sound. Then Walt heard it again, this time near and clear, and we doubled speed. With each step those long woolen stockings slipped further and further off his shoes until they resembled the flippers of an Alaskan seal. Then I, too, heard Don's voice. It sounded strong and reassuring but it was a definite call for help. Where was he? Finally we spotted him high up in a tree, looking down at us like a giant Panda in his black and white lumberman's shirt. The branch he had trimmed off hit the ladder as it fell and knocked it to the ground leaving him thoroughly treed. It took but a moment to rescue him and we returned to our work refreshed from this little diversion.

After the ceiling was completed, I returned to the panel of "God and Man" and finished it about the middle of August. During this work I was ever conscious of the watchful family eye. Everyone had tried to discourage me from painting these upper walls. Many suggestions were made of tilting chairs or of placing a cot on top of the scaffolding and many dire stories were told of neck muscles becoming stiff for life. I wanted to avoid that dreaded sentence, always so unctuously uttered, "I told you so!" Therefore, using a modicum of wisdom I chose to paint the next panel on the floor level directly in front of my eyes. This was the first of four similar panels combining Scriptural passages in medieval script within floral design. For this panel the following selection had been made, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made by hands, eternal in the heavens." In St. Paul's inspired letters to his little band of followers at Corinth he tries to re-establish their wavering faith. "Look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." Then follows the passage used in our panel. This was Paul's message of confidence to the troubled world in the first century, and it is his message to us in this disturbed twentieth century.

The floral detail around this passage looks simple now that it is finished and painted on the wall, but it was not easy. Each line had to find its right rhythm to flow into the next; each shade of color the right tonal vibration to harmonize with the one beside it. And finally, there had to be a balance of line and color throughout the panel.

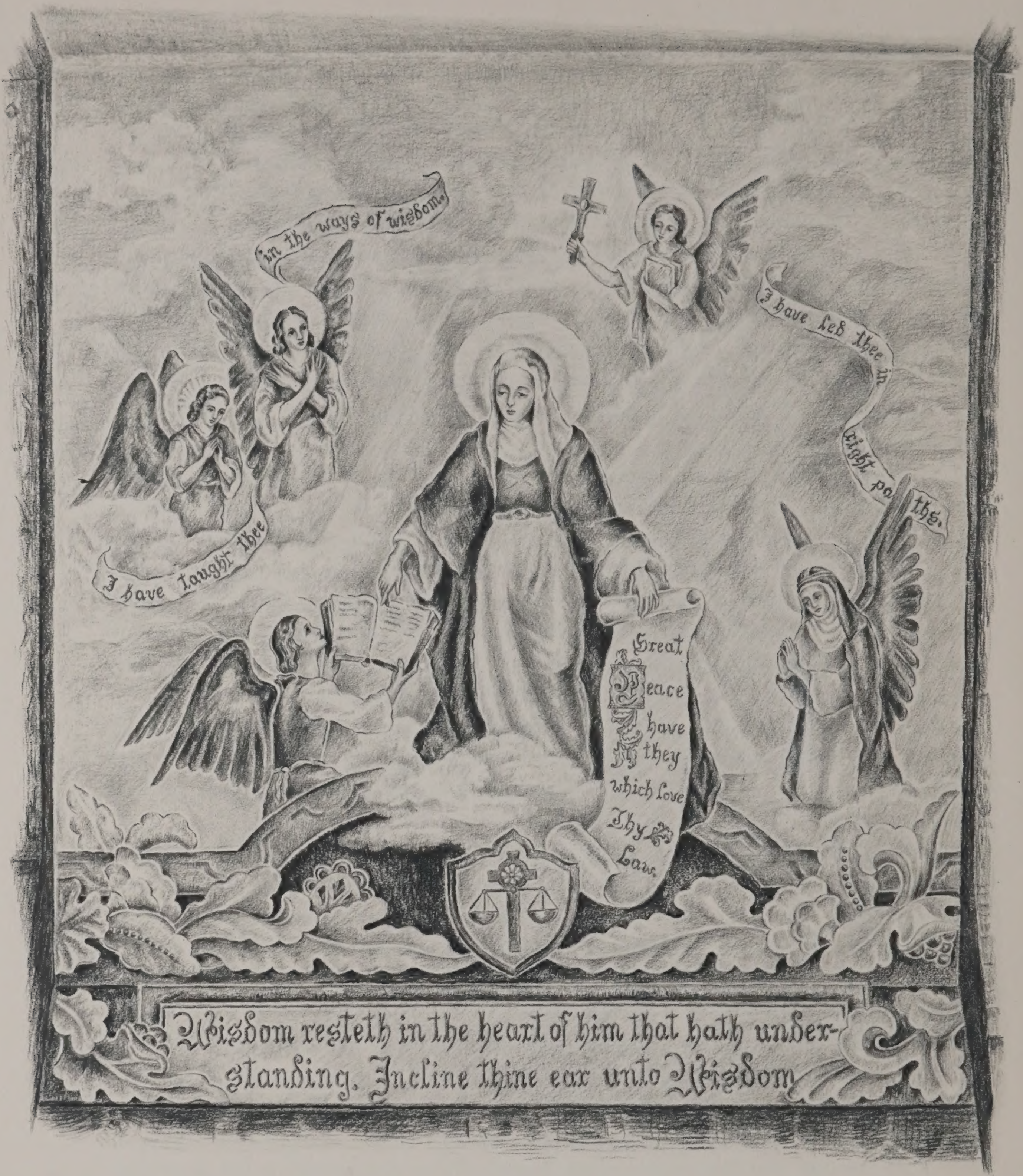
Work was progressing well but there were many interruptions. My "Line-a-day Book" for August twenty-fifth has "Twenty-one visitors here today, all strangers. Painted when possible." I remember that eight of the callers that morning were men, surprisingly enough, who were so interested in the work being done, they asked to bring their wives in the afternoon. How I wished they would all come at once!

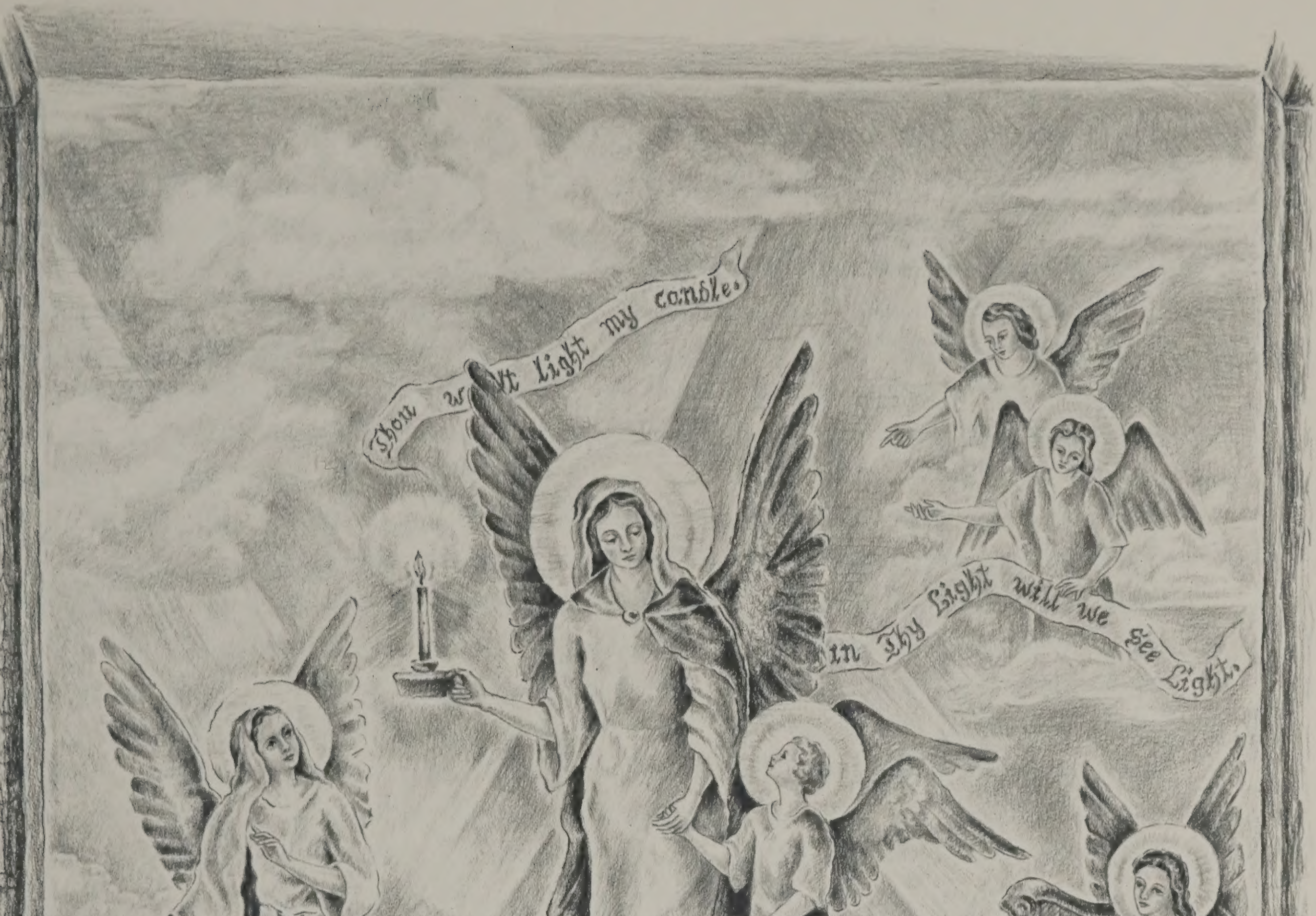
At times it seemed that some malign force was trying to keep me from painting. Even our setter dog, Jigger, who was always in the Chapel when I worked, became a perfect nuisance. If I moved on the platform she would suddenly wake up and, scrambling to her feet, wagging her tail, would plead with her soulful eyes for me to come down and take her for a walk. Finally to get rid of such excessive eagerness I would climb down and take us both along the trails through the woods. It was good for me, too, for I never knew when to stop.

I remember one day toward the end of the afternoon, that Don came to the Chapel suggesting a walk along the west boundary line over the fields. Here we could watch the clouds gathering along the horizon and the sun sending long shafts of light into the sky, before dropping out of sight like a huge red ball of fire. We walked quietly on a little used path paralleling an old broken-down rail fence. Suddenly, a doe appeared right before us. In the tall grass she had neither seen nor heard our approach. Bounding up and down she hardly moved from the spot, her white flag waving frantically. And then we saw under her, a little new-born Bambi! At first we wondered if it could move. Slowly, the fawn got up on its spindly, wobbling legs and gradually moved forward with its mother. Breathlessly we watched and I felt a tightening in my throat because of the tender beauty of these animals. We brought the children the next afternoon but the deer had gone.

Mounting the scaffolding again I started on the next panel. It was to interpret peace as coming through wisdom. Passages had been selected from Proverbs, "Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding. Incline thine ear unto wisdom." The wisdom of allowing God's will to be done; the understanding that the kingdom of God is within each one of us. "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." If we accept God's will as ours; uniting ourselves with the living, inspiring spirit of God working within us we can lay aside the visible tools of our hands and work with the invisible ones of the spirit. For a beginner all tools are difficult but wisdom says "Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding."

Years ago, when searching for the subject matter to be used in the Chapel I had made a study of Swedish and Norwegian saints. Among them, renowned for her piety and wisdom, was St. Birgitta who is the central figure of this panel. Kneeling at her right, an angel holds an open Bible. Held in her left hand a scroll reads "Great peace have


I have taught thee
in the ways of wisdom.
I have led thee in right paths.
Great Peace have they which love Thy Law.
Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding. Incline thine ear unto Wisdom


Thou w lt light my candle.
in Thy Light will we see Light.
Ye were sometimes Darkness, now are ye Light
in the Lord: walk as children of Light.

they which love Thy law." We are told that "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Smaller angels are in the background and on the narrow scroll is written, "I have taught thee in the ways of wisdom. I have led thee in right paths." The order of Birgittines, founded by St. Birgitta in the fourteenth century, is still in existence today. Below at the right is one of the nuns of this order.

I had few problems with St. Birgitta. She came alive without difficulty. She was withdrawn and aloof as was to be expected of a Mother Superior and a Saint. The only problem here was plaster scars that centered, by some mischance, exactly on the faces of St. Birgitta and the angel kneeling beside her. Finally I was able to turn these scars to good use and in the end they gave an added look of antiquity. There seemed to be a happy sense of peace in working on this panel. I loved going into the stillness of the Chapel, climbing to the platform and working alone. The doors of consciousness were shut to the rest of the world and the days formed into an easy pattern of work.

When this panel of wisdom was finished I started at once on the panel of "Light." It was always exciting to start a new panel. No matter how tired I had become in finishing the last one, fresh vitality came with the thrill of starting a new one. I remember so well when the idea of this mural popped into my mind and out again onto a small pad of paper carried in my purse for shopping lists. Ideas are born anywhere . . . in taxis, on the street, or on the train. There is no telling when or where they will arrive. While a city-bound train lurched and swayed I had made a quick sketch of a mother looking down into the upturned face of her little child whose hand was tucked into hers. This hurried sketch was developed later into the present design illustrating "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of Light." There is no simile so closely correlated with the invisible substance of spirit as light. No one can touch it or see it; without it there could be no life. Jesus said, "I am come a light into the world that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." With loving trust the child reflects the light of spiritual understanding as she looks into her mother's face, lighted by the candle, the symbol of spiritual light. On the scroll is found, "Thou wilt light my candle. In Thy light will we see light." Later other angels were added in the background to complete the design which was now ready to be painted on the wall.

The figure of the mother and child developed with little or no trouble. Sometimes work moved so fast that I was hardly conscious of anything else; and then again there would seem to be a solid impasse where nothing moved unless it moved backwards. As a rule, adult faces were much easier for me to paint than those of children and as soon as I blocked in the features they seemed to come to life and talked to me with suggestions, such as—"No, no, you have my nose too large and my eyes too close." As the figures took form we had delightful, friendly conversations. In this panel, however, the angel playing a harp in the lower right corner simply would *not* co-operate. I sandpapered her off so many times there seemed little plaster left on which to paint. I lifted her face, shortened her nose, tried everything to no avail. Becoming desperate I almost put horns and a tail on her and consigned her to the regions below as did Michelangelo; but then remembering that this was a sanctuary of peace I would begin again. Even now, when I catch her eye, which I really try to avoid, there is a hostile unangel-like expression, and automatically I reach for the sandpaper.

By now there was a new quality in the air, a crispness and tang that brought increased vitality and joy in the day's work. The bracken began to shrivel and turn brown. Splashes of color appeared here and there in the groves of maples and birches. Like signal flags they warned us that Fall was coming. Did I dare start on the larger panel of "Angels of Prayer?" How thrilling it would be to open the door and see a series of finished panels! Caution was thrown to the winds! I went to work.

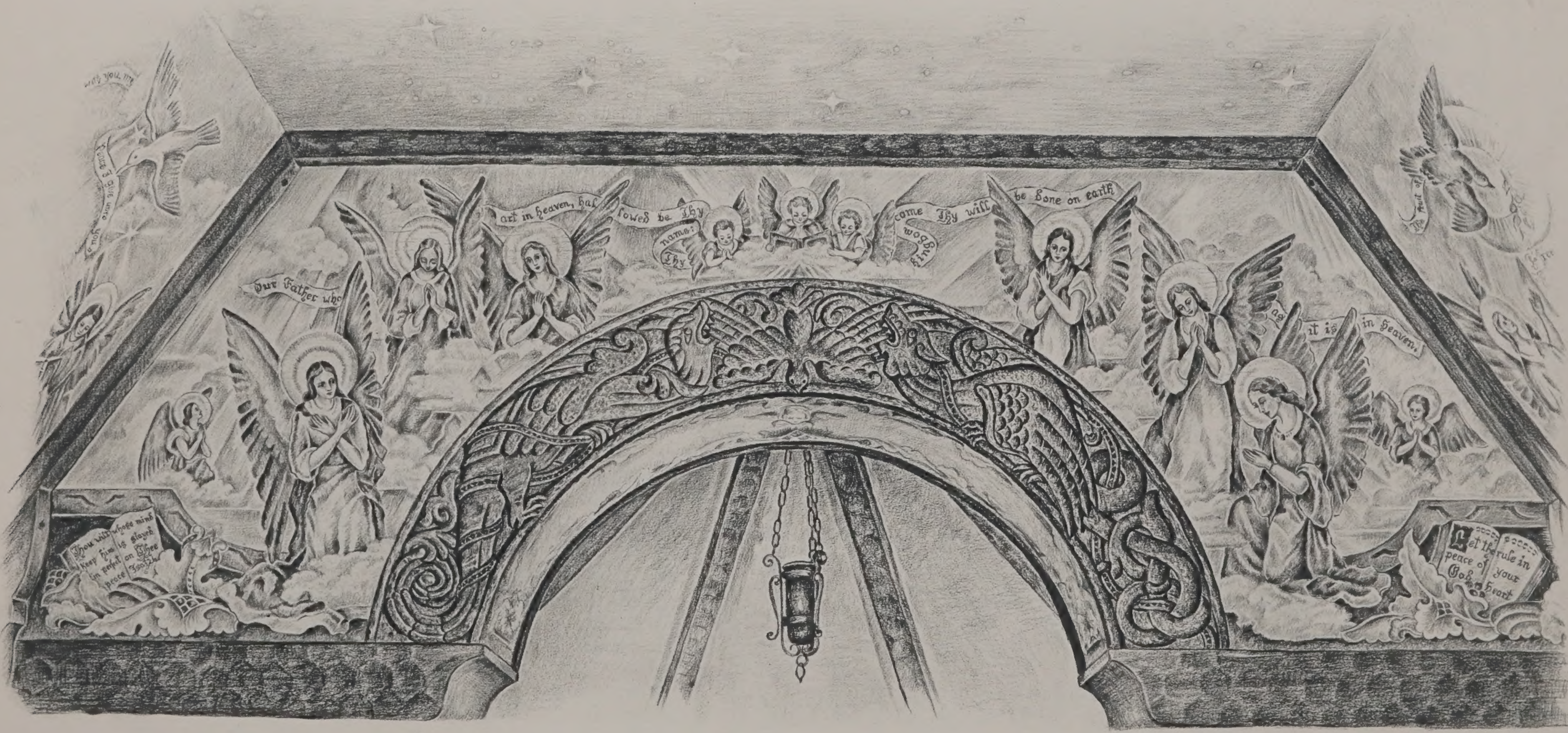
There are eleven angels in this panel, all portrayed in attitudes of prayer. Below their kneeling forms, within a floral design, are two open Bibles on which is written "Let the peace of God rule in your heart" and "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." At the peak of the arch, three rose-and-green-winged cherubim are peering into an open Bible. The opening phrases of the Lord's Prayer are written on the narrow scroll floating through the clouds.

It was a thrilling experience to watch the angels take form. As each figure was completed the spiritual significance of the entire panel became clearer even as each phrase of the Lord's Prayer augments the profound affirmations of those inspired words.

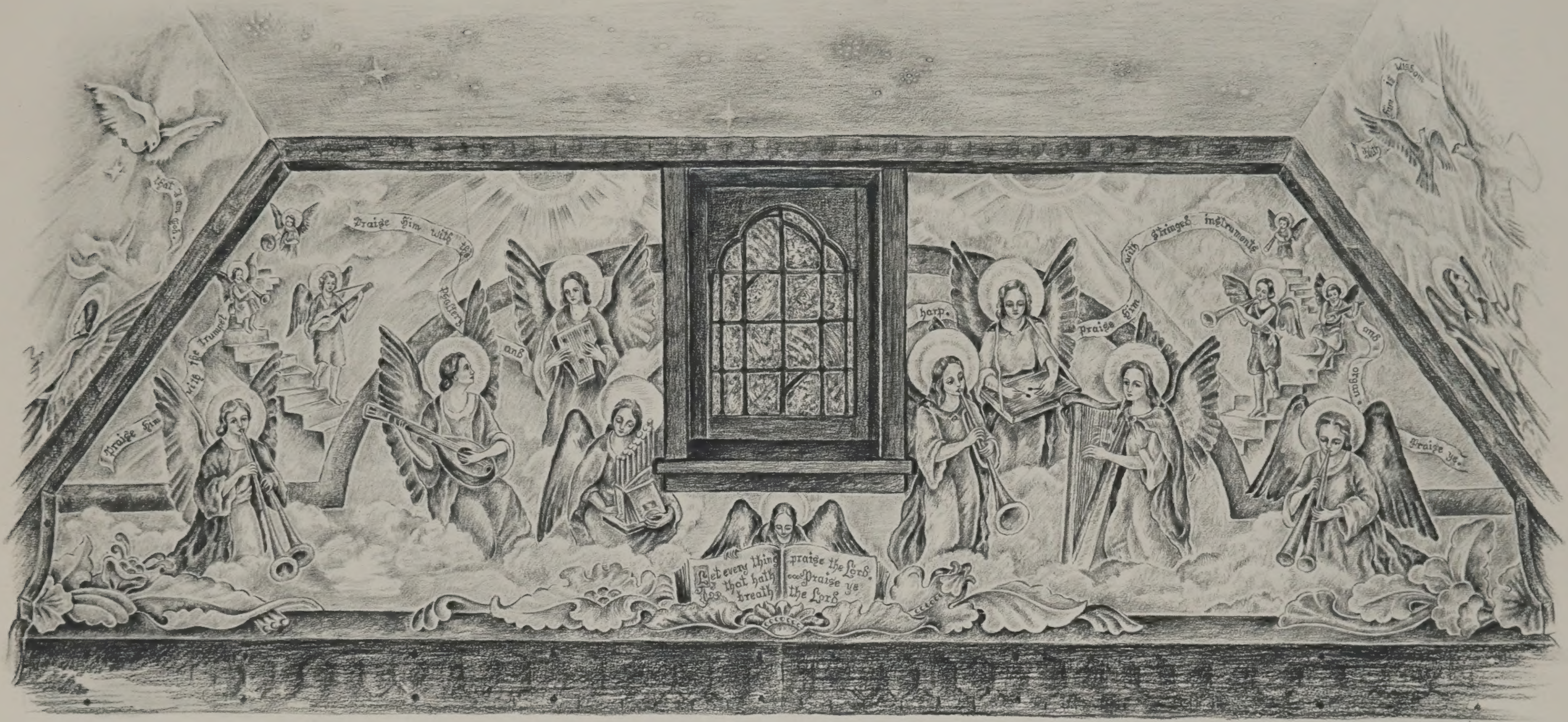
Matthew says, "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret; shall reward thee openly." First it is necessary to shut the door on earthly consciousness which is not always easy to do. I remember shortly after starting this panel a problem arose that seemed to engulf me. Painting in the Chapel was, for the most part, an emotional relief when life became too complex; the complete absorption in work lessened the tension of other problems. But this time I could not work. Again and again I went to the Chapel, climbed the ladder and sat in front of the panel unable to think, blind to everything but my inner conflict.

Perhaps it was my own need that brought each sentence of the Lord's Prayer into sharp focus. Going over each phrase, day by day, I listened for the overtones and they came, reaching higher and higher, strengthening my own understanding and at last peace came and I was able to return to my painting, enter my closet and shut the door.

There were mechanical as well as spiritual problems to be solved while painting this panel. I was to learn much through the years of work in the Chapel. Scars in the plaster that were resistant to paint were made to add rather than detract from the general effect. Opaque white mixed with whatever color was needed was sprayed on the scars with a small mouth-spray, or else the technique of Seurat was used, the application of small dots of pure color. Many times, in corners or where side panels met with those of the


Our Father who
art in heaven, hal
lowed be Thy
name; Thy
kingdom
come Thy will
be done on earth
as
it is
in heaven.
Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee
Let the peace of God rule in your heart

Angels of Prayer


that I am God.
Praise him with the trumpet
Praise him with the psaltery and
harp.
Praise him with stringed instruments
and organ.
Praise ye.
him is wisdom
Let every thing that hath breath
praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord

Angels of Praise

ceiling, fresh patches of plaster had to be applied. All equipment for such emergencies was at hand. Spiritually I learned to "wait on the Lord," knowing full well that "I can of mine own self do nothing" but my "sufficiency is of God."

The panel of "Prayer" was finished the day before we left for the Summer. Just before our departure Don and I went to the Chapel, our hearts full of gratitude for all the blessings of the year. The Cross with the Angel of Peace stood on the Altar; the Angels of Prayer looked down from above. Surely peace was here!

CHAPTER VI

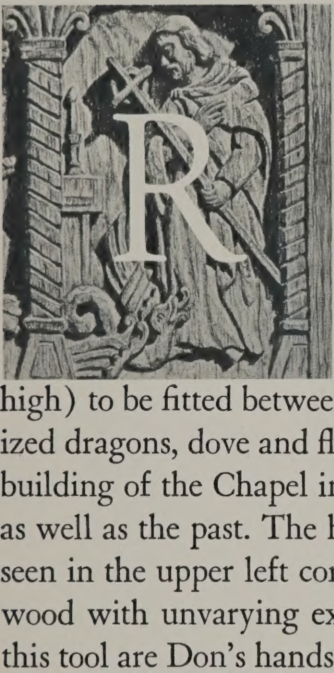
SIXTH SUMMER

1944

Work is love made visible.

Gibran

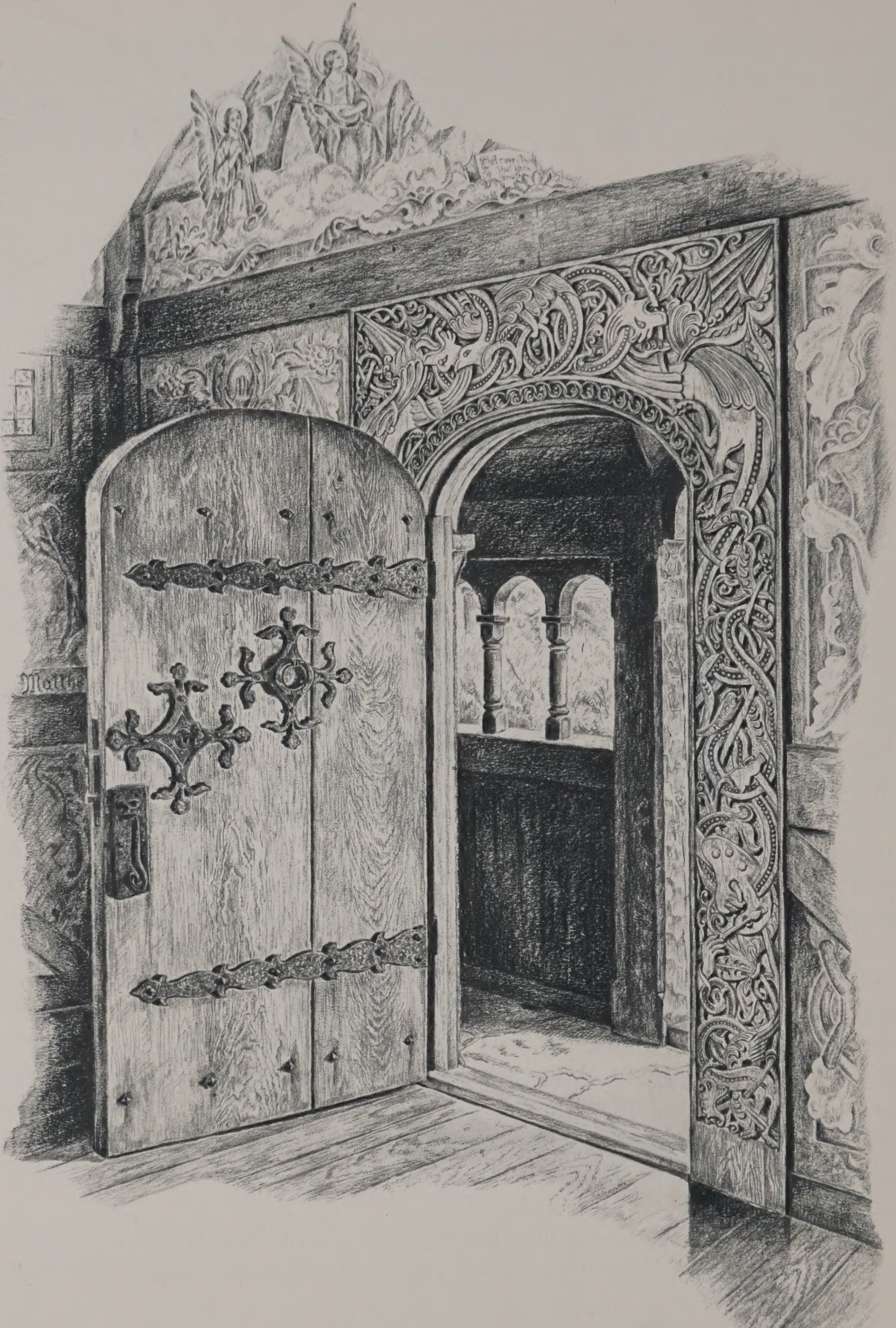
FAITH



Returning each Fall to carving classes, now being held at the home of one of the class members, was like a family reunion. Questions crowded each other—"What did you do during the Summer?" and then the all-important one—"What do you plan to carve this Winter?"

The architrave around the entrance door in the interior of the Chapel was to be our next project. Long strips of butternut (7½ feet high by 10 inches wide) were to frame the door on either side and another piece (about 3 feet wide and 2 feet high) to be fitted between these over the arch. In the design of elaborately conventionalized dragons, dove and floral motifs, we planned to include every implement used in the building of the Chapel in order that it might have historical significance for the present as well as the past. The hand-adzing implement used by the skilled Belgian craftsman is seen in the upper left corner. Day after day we had watched him shaving off chips of wood with unvarying exactness, forming a symmetrical pattern as he worked. Below this tool are Don's hands with hammer and nail. Further down is the bit and auger, the saw, and the carpenter's framing square. The axe and the pliers are included at the right and below these are my hands holding a palette and paintbrush. When these panels were ready to be carved we found they were too long to fit into the car with the windows shut so we endured the icy blasts of Winter in order to get our carving teacher's advice and help in this work. This proved to be the most interesting and successful carving we had yet accomplished.

But soon plans for an even greater task were being made. Surely, with our rapidly increasing progeny a baptismal font seemed essential. I could not remember seeing any


Matth

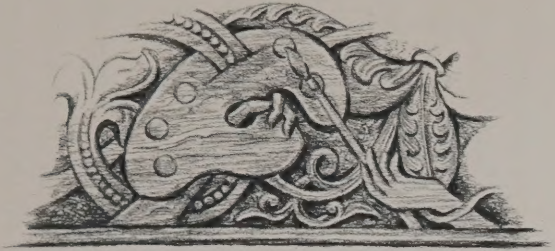
of these in the old Stavkirker we visited in Norway and Sweden. They were doubtless there but at that time we had no idea of building a Chapel and my mind was evidently not font-conscious.

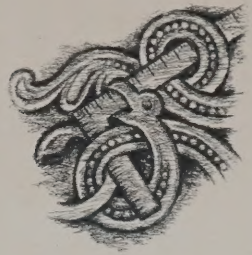
Again I went to Newberry Library during every free moment. I learned with interest that there are today more examples of early Nordic fonts in England than in Norway and Sweden. Little detailed information was available as to whether these fonts were round, square, large or small. Finally I wrote a Swedish friend in Boston. I had found him in a most unusual way. Walking one day along Boylston Street, several years before, I had seen a sign, "Edgren Studio," hanging above the door of an old private residence by then converted into a place of business. It might have been any kind of a studio but painted on either side of the name was a swish of flowers—unmistakably Swedish! I hurried up the steps. During the animated conversation that followed I found to my delight that Mr. Edgren had made a special study of early Swedish chapels. Imagine his surprise to find an American lady with the same interest! In his enthusiasm he loaned me many helpful photographs which had been given him by a curator in one of the Swedish museums.

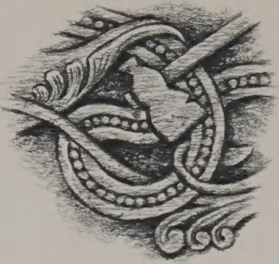
In the years that followed, whenever I reached an impasse I sought his advice and now I turned to him about fonts. By return mail he advised me to look in the two volumes of "The Viking Age." Fonts, in the "Viking Age!" And there they were! Just what I had hoped to find, square and squatty, carved in wood. Runic hieroglyphics were found on several of them. H'm'm'm—interesting! I wondered what could be done about it. If they were used at all, they must express some thought and not be merely copied symbols. I studied the Runic alphabet but it did not take long to discover that this idea was too complicated to pursue further.

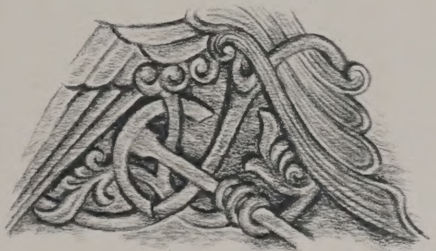
In this preliminary study of fonts I had been much intrigued with the ancient one at Burnham Deepdale in Norfolk, England. This was square with only three carved sides, since the fourth was against a pillar. Each of these sides was divided into four sections, making twelve in all. Each design represented a month in the year. That number twelve was the key! Suddenly the idea came of using the twelve Apostles instead of the twelve calendar months. There was the answer! The more this idea was developed the more eminently satisfactory it seemed. It was these disciples who brought us the rite of baptism. Earlier religious groups had used this symbolism of conversion before Christ, but it was the twelve Apostles who had made this holy sacrament a part of our Christian faith. Just before His ascension Jesus Christ said to His disciples, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

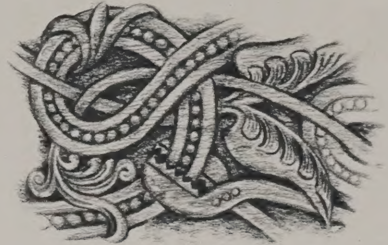
The idea for our font was now established. That was the more difficult task. There remained only the conversion of this idea into design. We wanted the font to be of seasoned oak, having the true, clean grain necessary for carving. It seemed impossible to get

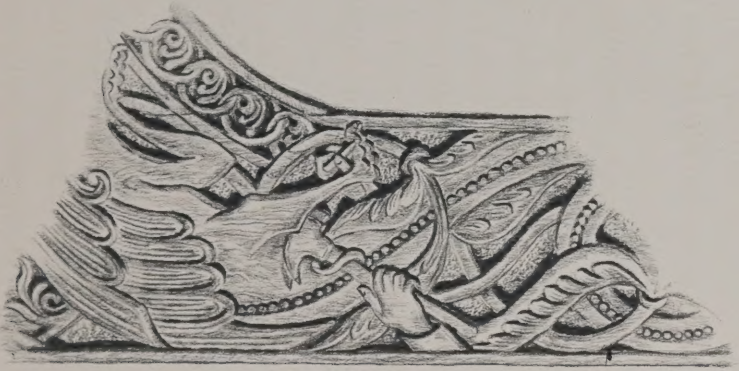


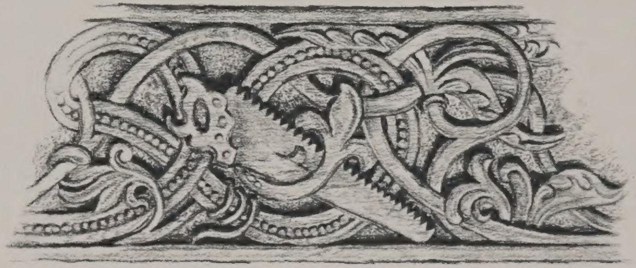












oak at this time because of priorities for shipbuilding, but by patient effort Don secured the needed amount of Wisconsin white oak. During this interim of waiting, a dummy was made to determine the size and proportion of the entire font. The magnitude of the engineering problems presented to poor Don were unknown to me. It is so easy to make sketches; angles mean nothing with a pencil and ruler. The upper four panels rest on a pedestal of sixteen pieces of wood, the dihedral angles of which posed a nice problem. The entire font of twenty-four pieces had to be assembled and carefully fitted together before it was ready to carve.

Our font is thirty-nine inches high and twenty-three inches wide. It weighs one hundred and thirty pounds. It took us six hundred and fifty-six hours to carve! So says Don, and he is usually right. This does not include time spent in research and preliminary designs. The upper panels are twenty-three inches wide by seventeen and a half inches high. After allowing a five inch band at the top for a design of dragons, the remainder is divided into three sections, with four panels this makes twelve sections, one for each disciple. I could find no examples either in woodcarving or in painting where the disciples were portrayed without their symbols of death. Suffering and death did not belong in this little sanctuary of peace. Surely something else could be found either in the Bible or accredited legend to identify each disciple. The research was deeply rewarding. The disciples became living personalities.

James, Peter, and John were selected for the first panel; chosen in this order because the Bible so often mentions them together. James and John were brothers, fishermen by trade. James is shown holding a fish, standing beside his ship, on the prow of which a dragon-head is carved to make him quite at home in this Scandinavian environment. Peter, with his traditional two keys hanging at his side, is shown in the second section, baptizing a small child who kneels in the foreground. To indicate that he was one of the founders of the Christian church, the silhouette of our own little Chapel is included in the background as a symbol of all churches. John, the beloved disciple, holds a chalice with a serpent emerging from it. Legend says he was given poisoned wine to drink but on lifting the chalice to his lips the poison came out in the form of a serpent and left him unharmed. The eagle at John's feet is his symbol as an Evangelist.

With this design completed we were ready to start on our most ambitious adventure in carving. As ignorant of what lay ahead as two babes in the woods, we began, unskilled but also undaunted. Fortunately we had our carving teacher, a competent guide to help us on our way. He mapped out the levels for perspective and made many important suggestions. It was his idea that each disciple under separate arches be given a concave background to resemble a dome under the arch. Shadows and perspective are essential for effective carving. Don had no prior experience in modeling figures and preferred to work on the lower panels of the pedestal designed of interlacing circles. The "fluteroni" became his pet tool and he did expert, clean-cut work.

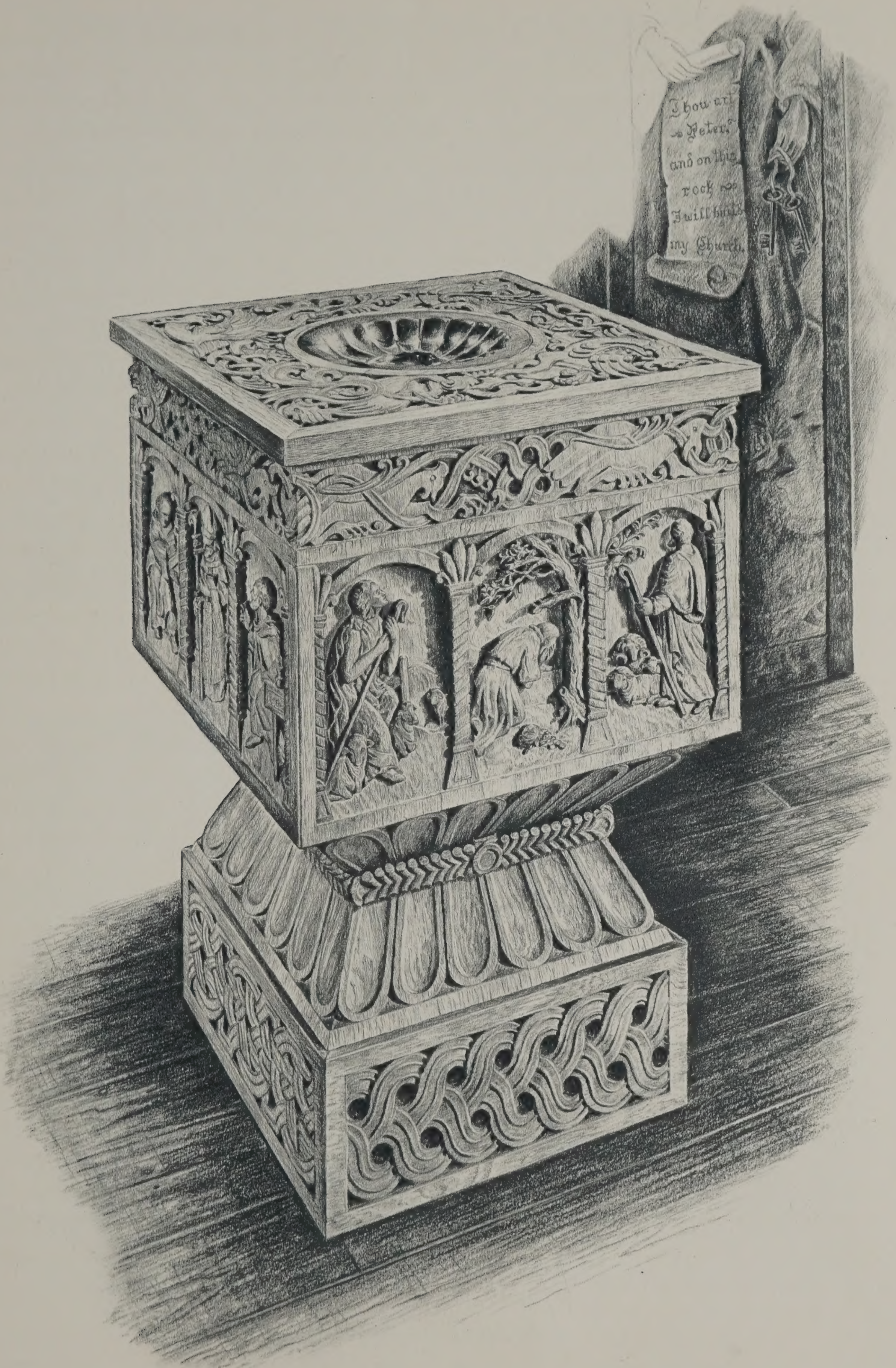
The upper panels were left for me to carve. Of course I was scared. But nothing could be more thrilling than diving headfirst with chisel and mallet into a smooth-planed panel of wood! Looking now at the figures and faces of the twelve Apostles, all so different, it hardly seems possible that my only models were Don and a plaster cast of Venus di Milo! She was invaluable when Don was not near. In the bone structure of a head there are only minor differences in sex. All but two of the disciples had whiskers and that helped. But our carving professor was very reassuring. "You can *always* correct mistakes," he would say. Amazed, we asked "Even when a head is ruined?" "Yes," he answered, "You can even replace a decapitated head!" It was never bad enough for that but there are several surprising additions that are invisible even to the curious.

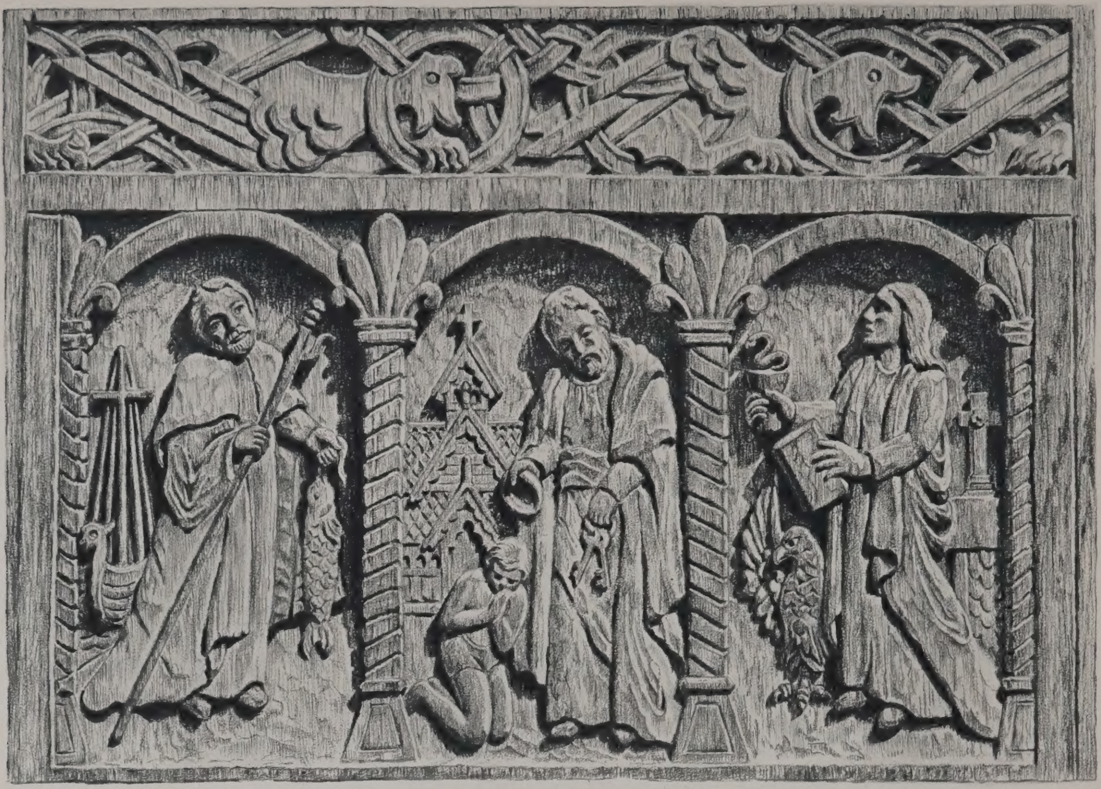
James was the first to be carved, and, made a little reckless by our teacher's encouragement, I gave him too close a hair-cut and he had to have the side of his head replaced. I did not realize that the position of a head could make a great difference in the ease of carving. A three-quarter view had been given James, one of the hardest positions to carve when using a somewhat low relief. There would be days when I emerged from the workshop only to eat and sleep.

Before leaving for the Summer, I completed the second panel, of Andrew, Nathaniel, and Philip. Andrew was the elder brother of Peter and it is generally agreed that he was the first to follow Jesus. He is portrayed as a fisherman. There was little information available about Nathaniel, sometimes called "Bartholomew." In the book of John we find—"Philip findeth Nathaniel and saith unto him, 'We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth' . . . 'Come and see.' " He came and Jesus said, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." In our design Nathaniel is sitting under the fig tree. Philip, in the next section, is shown holding a long staff surmounted by the Cross. After the Ascension he went as a missionary to an Asiatic people who worshipped a dragon. With the power of his faith he slew the dragon and converted the people. This event is represented in the design.

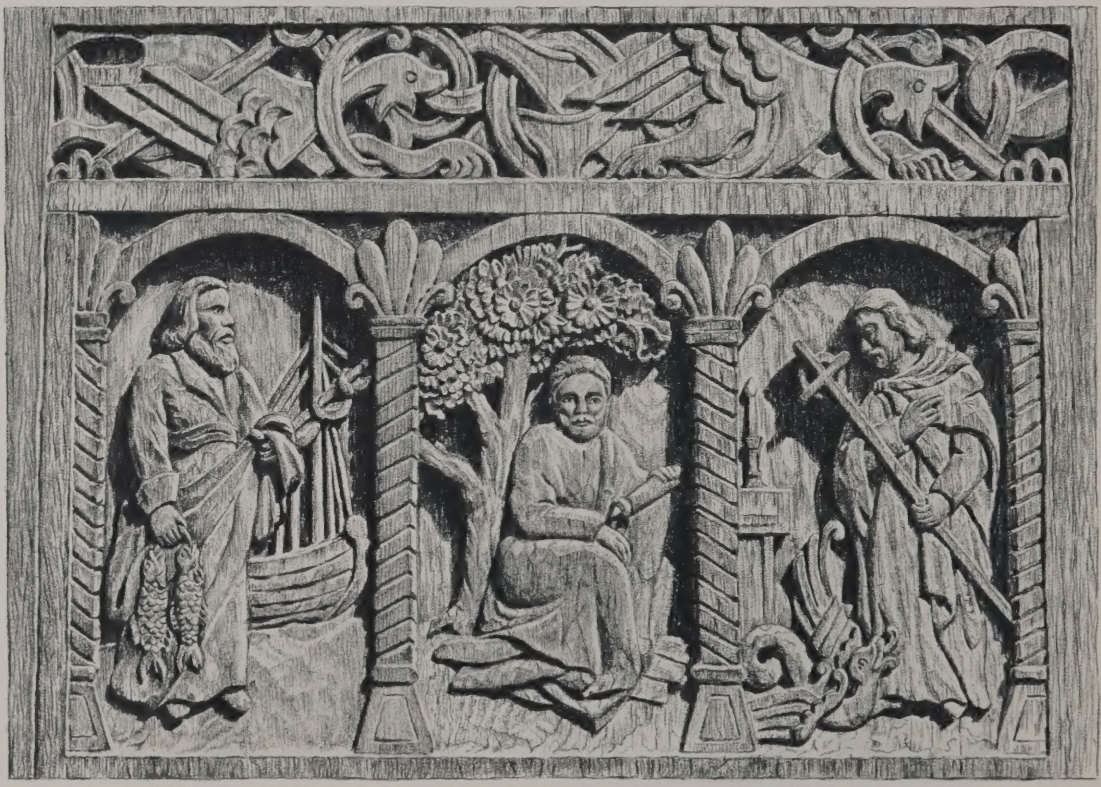
All this work went on during the Winter. We did not try to carve during the Summer. Lumber could be carried back and forth from Highland Park, but the Chapel "was founded on a rock" that could not be moved and during those all too short Summer months every spare moment was devoted to painting murals.

It was not until May that we were ready to move up to Björklunden for the Summer. A large house party had been planned for over Memorial Day week end. Arriving there we found that Spring had donned midsummer's robes. Everyone wanted to be out of doors and everyone wanted to help with the work about the place which had become our responsibility now that our caretaker, Milt, was occupied in war activities at a nearby shipyard. It was all too evident that one of the first jobs must be to paint the terrace furniture. Just what they all wanted to do! What fun! Each was given a can of paint


Thou art
Peter,
and on this
rock
I will build
my Church.



James, Peter and John



Andrew, Nathaniel and Philip

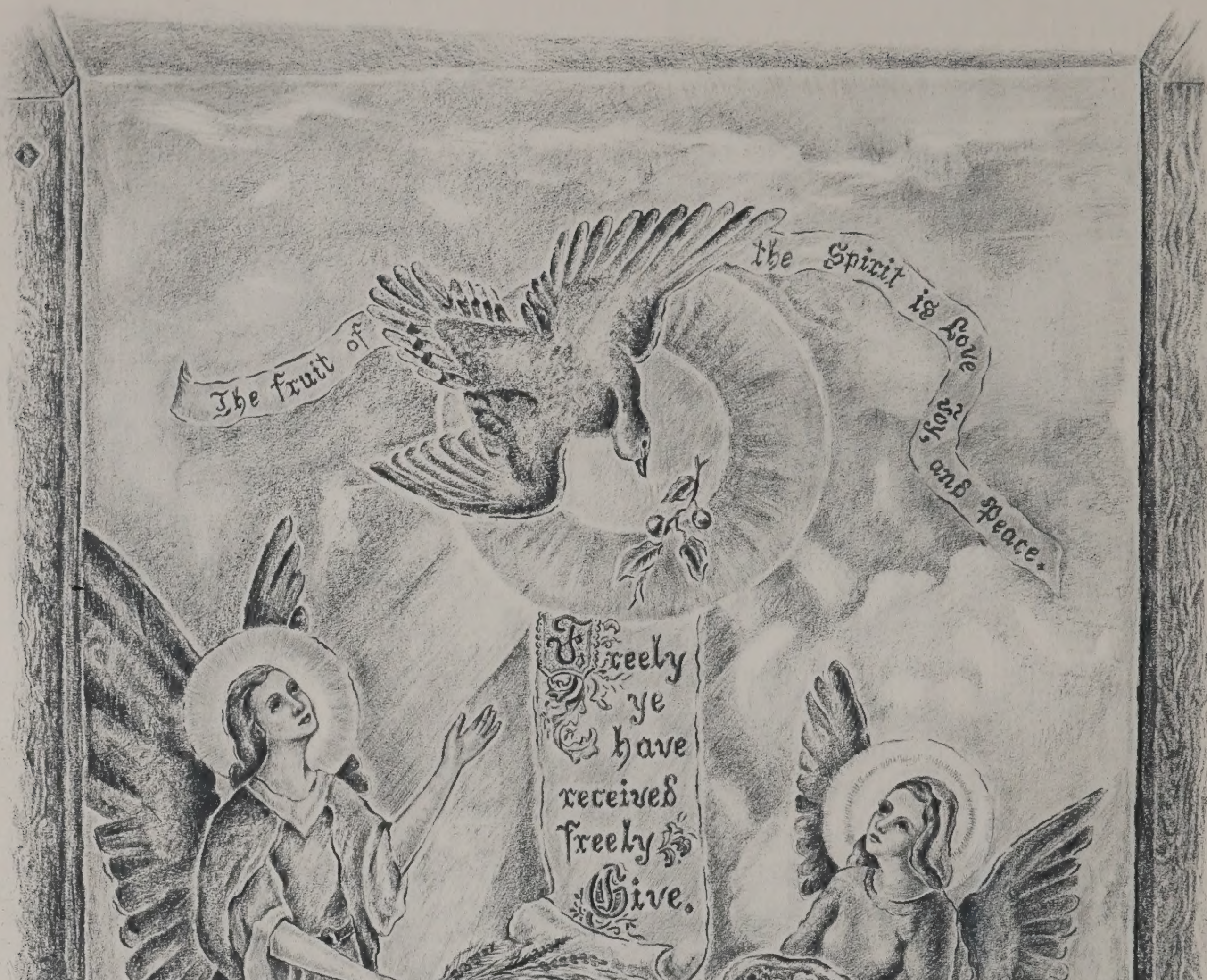
and each a brush. In record time the furniture was finished. Paint was everywhere and what was left was on the furniture. By the second day the terrace was resplendent in its gay freshness and we celebrated by having luncheon served there.

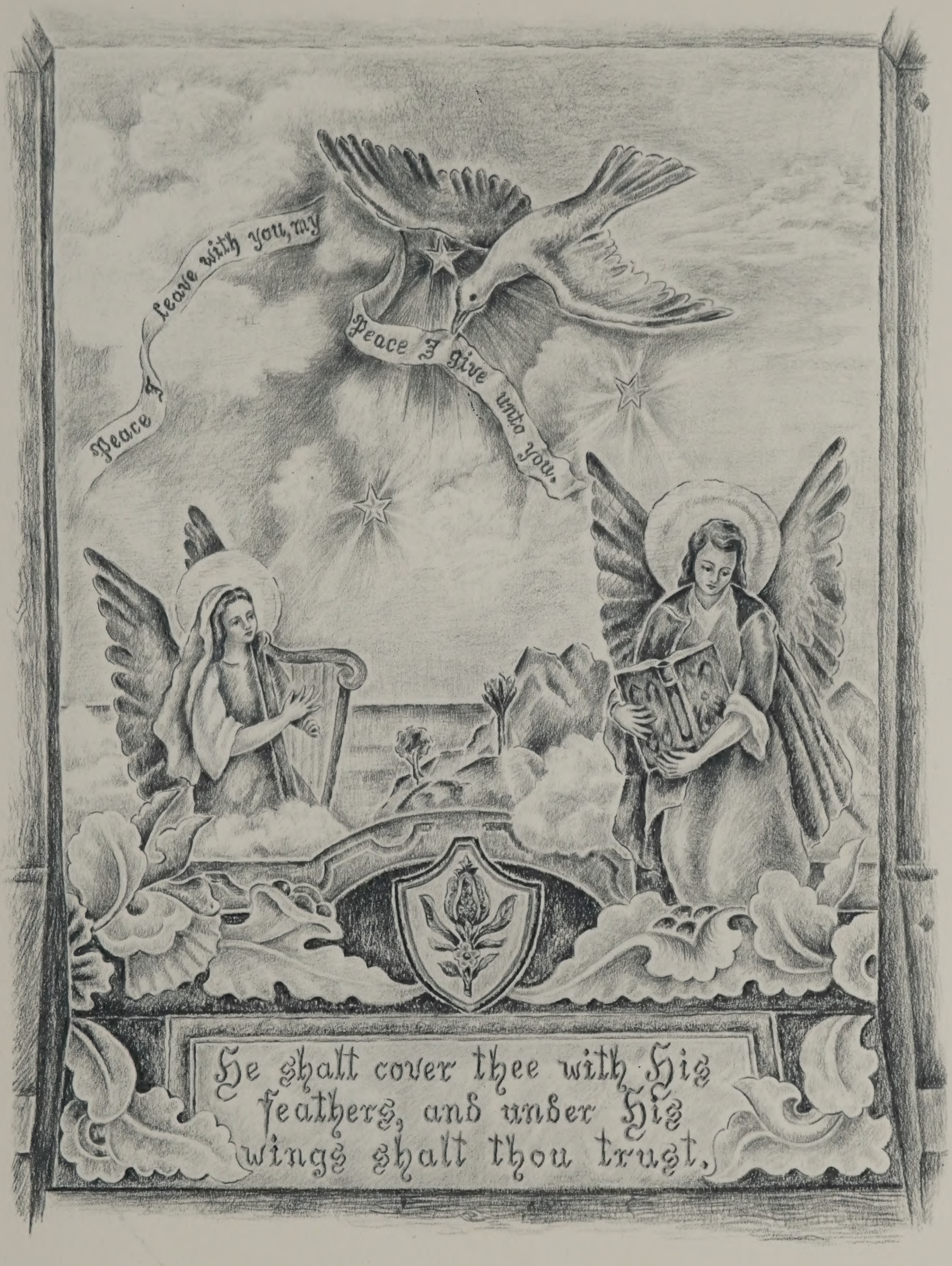
Not long after this, work was resumed in the Chapel, a moment long anticipated! But when everything was ready with paints and equipment at hand, I looked at the panel above the pulpit on which the outline of the next design had been traced. I felt completely lost. It seemed as though I had never painted before. I had no idea where or how to begin. Looking at the other completed panels, I wondered if I, myself, had painted them. It was always difficult to resume painting after eight months of doing completely unrelated work, but it had never been like this! Day after day I went to the Chapel hoping and praying that this feeling would pass; and finally it did pass. It was as though the Chapel watched with dismay this useless struggle within myself; this over-consciousness of self and too little consciousness of God. Little by little the peace of the Chapel quieted me. When the realization came that the source of power did not lie within myself, the fear that I had lost the ability to work, vanished.

This panel, entitled "Spiritual Food," and symbolizing communion with God, seems to have an ever deepening significance. A dove is shown flying down from the sun, both being symbols of God. The olive branch, which the dove bears, interprets peace, consecration and healing. The angel on the left holds wheat, signifying the "Bread of Life." The Chalice within the emblem below symbolizes the Wine. The fruit in the basket held by the angel on the right interprets "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy and peace." Having accepted these gifts we are asked to share them . . . "Freely ye have received, freely give." Life is renewed and made whole through giving and receiving. We cannot give to others the love, joy and peace which is the fruit of the spirit unless in some small measure our lives attest that we have received them. The entire panel representing God's gift to us of spiritual food, interprets the first request of the Lord's Prayer . . . "Give us this day our daily bread" and acknowledges that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of Lights."

From a purely physical standpoint this was a most difficult panel to paint. The pulpit, jutting out into the Nave made it impossible to work from the scaffolding. Heavy planks were laid from the platform to the window frame above the pulpit, and on these I sat, cross-legged, leaning backwards, for the next few weeks. Although most Buddhas sit this way they are usually shown seated on a lotus flower, which I am sure is softer, much softer, than a wooden plank! I never see one of these little figures without feeling a sympathetic twinge in the muscles of my thighs and back.

One day while working on this panel I answered the 'phone to hear Central say, "New York calling!" and soon I heard the voice of our son, Carl. He did not actually say he was leaving at once for overseas but I knew it the moment I heard his tense voice. I tried to keep my voice keyed to the same excited optimism pretending I was sure all would be


The fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, and Peace.
Freely ye have received freely Give.
Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of Lights.


Peace I leave with you, my
Peace I give unto you.
He shalt cover thee with His
feathers, and under His
wings shalt thou trust,

well. I thought I had prepared myself for this moment but one is never prepared. How quickly fear numbs one's sensibilities! Perhaps that is God's way of helping. I found my way back to the Chapel and mechanically picked up my paintbrush. Work, work, the blessing of work! In due time this panel was finished.

In the following weeks the Chapel heard many prayers. Our other son, Ted, was now on the cruiser Savannah, taking a shake-down cruise before going into final action and Carl was either en route or had arrived in Europe. Placing them both under God's protection I would try to so attune my mind to the Infinite, that power, strength and wisdom might help me find the right demonstration in the work of the Chapel. Then climbing the ladder I would get out my paints and be ready to work.

The path from the house to the Chapel became deeper each day. Hidden roots seemed to thrust themselves up to trip me as I rushed back and forth in my eagerness not to miss a word of the news broadcast. The long-planned invasion was on! No false rumors this time but the actual *invasion!* It was all so stupendous and on such a gigantic scale that human minds could hardly grasp the full significance of the news as it came. We did, however, understand the all-important fact that landings had been made successfully and the enemy was being forced back farther and farther into France. Tears of gratitude relieved the pressure too great to be contained. Yet even with this intense relief there was the realization of the cost in lives! Could this be the means of bringing peace, the peace for which the heartsick world was praying? This question was ever in our hearts during the days that followed. There was always the hope and always the uncertainty but the seed of hope began to grow.

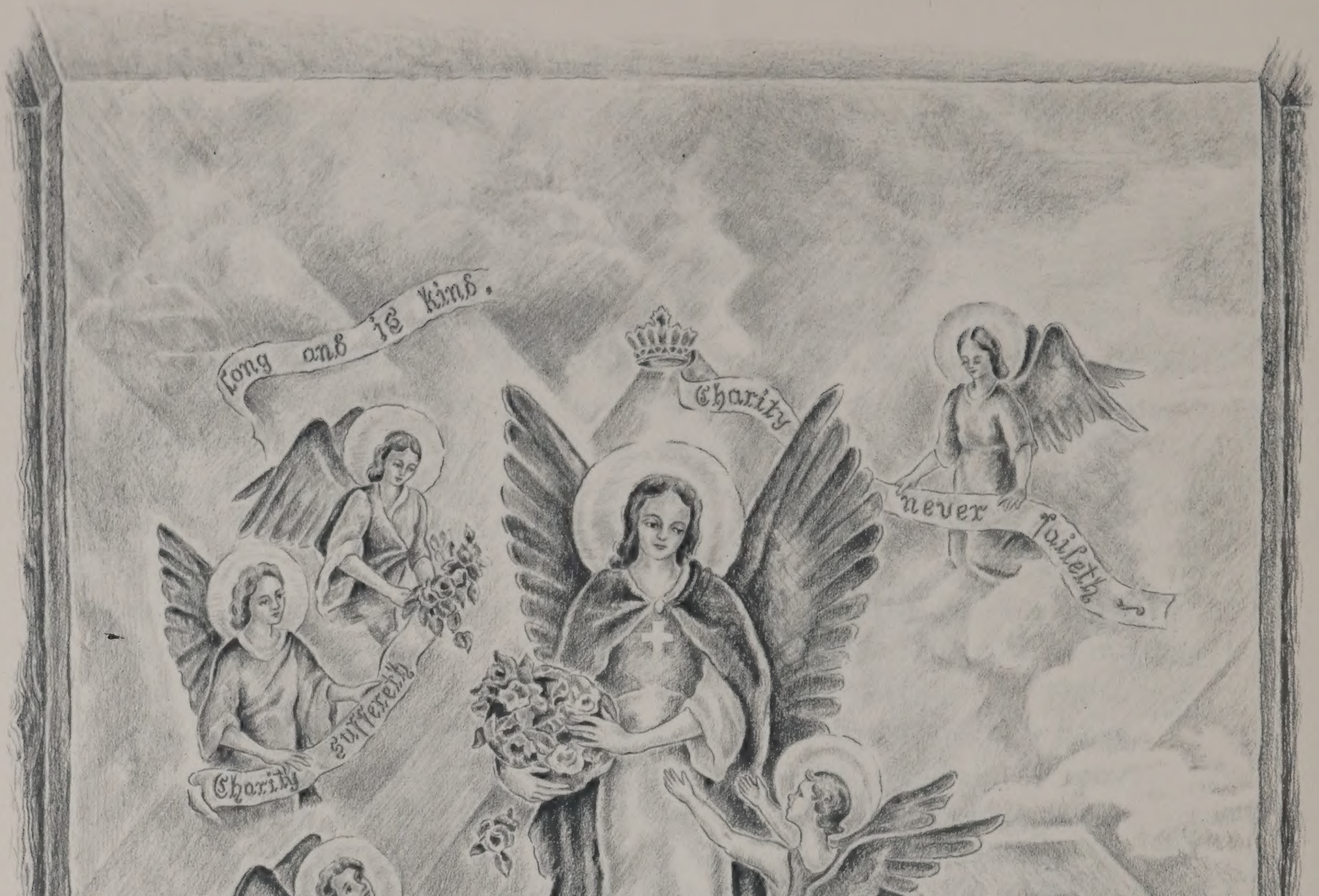
What little painting had been done in this interim was on script which took little thought. My mind was not on the Chapel. But now I could start on the next panel of "Trust." The passage from Psalms had been selected, "He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust." These words were given added meaning to me, for day after day while painting I often rested to watch a mother bird protectively covering her eggs with soft wings on the narrow ledge of the window directly under this panel.

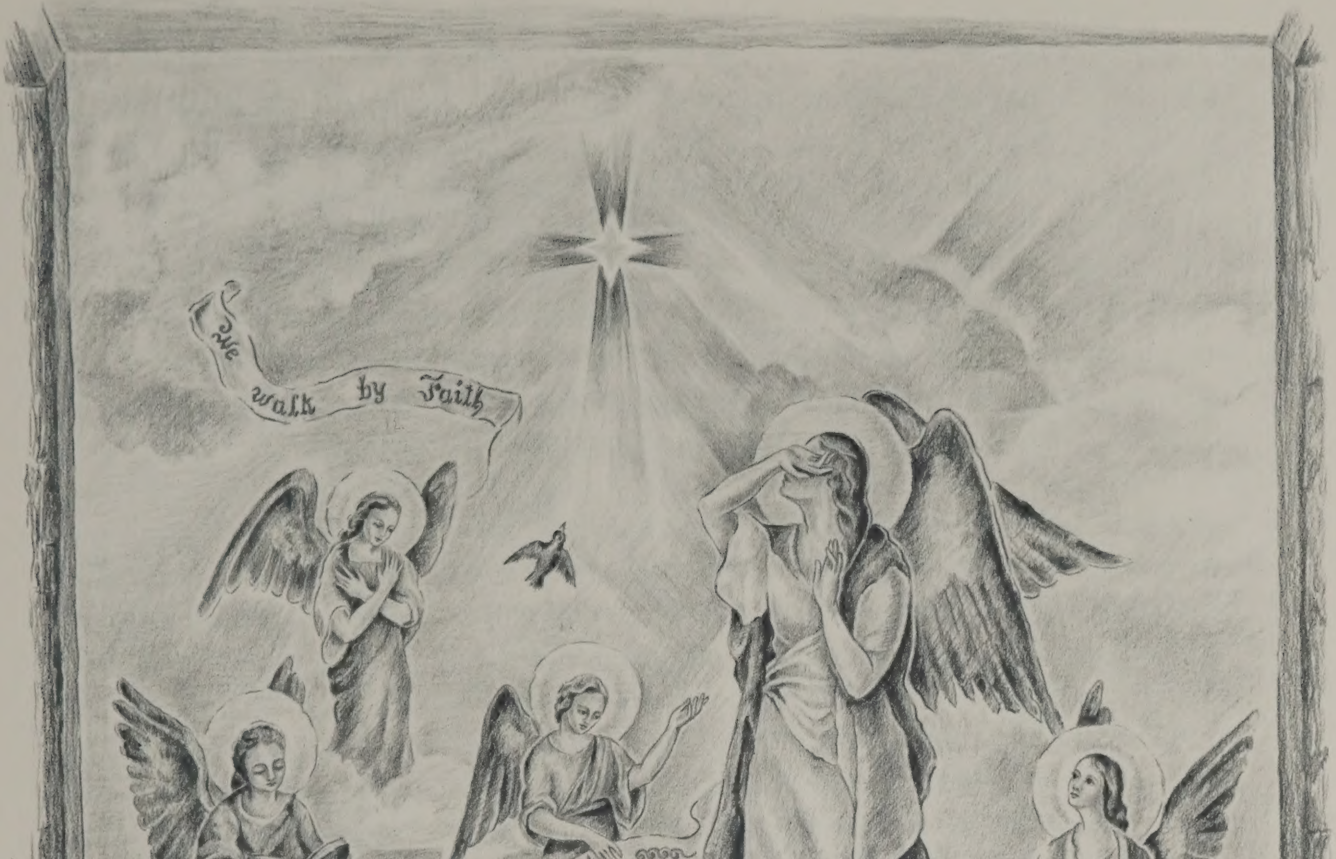
There are two angels shown in this design, one playing a harp, the symbol of joy; and the other holds a Bible. Within the emblem at the bottom a bursting pomegranate symbolizes the care and protection of God. Above the figures a dove flies through the clouds ... "And lo, the heavens were opened ... and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove." On the scroll is written "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." This was the supreme expression of trust when Jesus, knowing that the cross was before Him, was comforting His disciples ... "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." These beautiful words give the entire meaning of His ministry, *peace,* because He trusted God completely. In this troubled world peace comes to those who learn to trust God. Only after patient effort does the swimmer trust himself to the transparent fluidity of water in order to be carried and supported by it. When we have learned to trust ourselves to God, then comes the more difficult lesson of trusting our children to Him. How often we turned to this panel when fear stalked too close. Fear and Faith cannot walk together. But the mother bird whom I watched daily did not have any difficulty in trusting her children to the unknown. For by the time I had finished this panel the little birds had flown and the nest was empty.

And now a new problem presented itself. Haying time had come and with Milt at the shipyards it was up to us! Around the main buildings the hay begins where the lawn leaves off. It was now knee-high and flanking the winding roads it was a definite fire hazard. We all went to work. Don saw that the motors of the sickle-bar and the lawn-mower were in order and we took turns running after them. Up and down over the uneven ground we would go, one guiding the sickle-bar and another chasing the lawn-mower, always with the breathless feeling we were not quite keeping up with them. The hay was then raked into mounds and pitched onto the truck to those waiting to receive it. Higher and higher grew the mound until finally, perched on top, we drove to a distant field, where it was left for the use of a farmer friend. I faced such diversions reluctantly for they meant leaving work on the Chapel, but I always returned refreshed.

The next mural will always be one of my favorites not only because of its inspirational content, but because it was the first, when thinking in terms of abstractions, to become instantly clear to me in meaning and interpretation. In First Corinthians is found, "Now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three; but the greatest of these is Charity." These words recalled the tender little legend of "The Miracle of the Roses." It concerns St. Elizabeth of Hungary, who though herself a Christian, had married into a pagan family. They forbade her at the cost of her life to give to the poor, but her deep love for children forced her to go out with her basket of bread. The king, passing by, demanded to know what was in the basket. If she said "Bread," Elizabeth knew she would be killed. So she replied, "Roses!" And when the king snatched away the cover, roses were there! The little panel-angels above are bringing this miracle to pass and are dropping roses into her basket. St. Elizabeth represents "Charity." The child kneels at her feet with outstretched hands to receive the gifts she so freely bestows. The three crowns in the shield below symbolize her triple crown as virgin, wife and widow, while the cross represents the anguish that so often dwelt in her own heart even while she poured out love to others.

Paul made it clear in this immortal chapter (I Cor. 13:3) that Charity is synonymous with Love. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor,—and have not Charity (Love), it profiteth me nothing." The bread and alms of St. Elizabeth were blessed with her sympathy for their suffering, with loving compassion for their grief. On the narrow scroll held by the angels is written, "Charity suffereth long, and is kind. Charity never faileth." This last is that alchemy which takes all bitterness away and enables us to "For-


Long and is kind.
Charity suffereth
Charity
Charity
never faileth
Now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three;
but the greatest of these is Charity.


We walk by Faith
and not by sight.
Now Faith is the substance of things hoped for,
the evidence of things not seen.

give those that trespass against us," knowing that in loving and forgiving others we ourselves are forgiven.

Each panel has a special place in our affections. They are like our children, each one is loved for itself and no one can take the place of the other. Perhaps from a standpoint of composition that of "Faith," the next panel which was now begun, has the greatest unity of expression. There was never any uncertainty in the interpretation of the passage selected, "Now Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The angel representing Faith is not blind as some have portrayed her. Without question she sees as she walks so freely over the clouds. With her hand before her eyes she is deliberately shutting out physical sight in order to have a clearer spiritual insight. The scroll reads "We walk by faith, and not by sight." It is faith in God that "Leads us not into temptation but delivers us from evil," bringing ultimate peace. Chimney swallows were used in this design. Building in the blackness of the chimney, an hour before dawn when it is still dark, they rise with a great rush of wings to meet the sun with faith that a new day will dawn. Above the angel, in the center, the Cross radiates light. Both light and the sun are symbols of God and upwards into the light the swallows fly. Below, within the emblem, the anchor symbolizes Hope and Faith.

We are told that faith is the evidence of things not seen. The most powerful forces within us are invisible, the power of thinking, of loving. Actually faith is already active in every phase of life. We have faith in anything in which we believe no matter how exalted or how trivial. We walk by faith toward an invisible goal which we see by faith. Faith continually lifts sight to new horizons. We work toward the things in which we believe and it is faith in that belief that gives us the power to work. The building of the Chapel was the material evidence of this fact.

While in the midst of painting this panel I was summoned home for the arrival of another grandson. On our return to Björklunden we found a V-letter postmarked England from Carl saying he had arrived safely after a fairly uneventful voyage. To be safe each day might mean forever, and we were learning to live by the day.

The next morning I hurried over to the Chapel to resume work on this panel of "Faith." Everything seemed difficult. I had trouble with the angel's feet! In walking, what happens to the back foot? A model would have helped, but when I went to find one of the girls, they had all disappeared. Zanne had posed for me when I was modeling the feet of the angel on the Cross who is supposed to be floating. She had quite a time dangling her feet to get the right position. Don had patiently posed for Peter's big toe, but I am getting ahead of my story. Finally, I decided to use my own feet and taking off shoes and stockings, I propped a mirror in front of them. It had its difficult moments—trying, up on the platform, to take a free step forward, hold the position of the back foot, move the mirror to the right angle and then with uncertain balance, hold paper and pencil while making the sketch.

It was amusing to find that the angel on the left, reading a book, took on a real likeness to Walt's wife, Frances. Several times this happened. There was never a conscious effort made to portray anyone but when a resemblance started I usually ended by making it a portrait.

The next mural, the panel of the "Eagles" proved to be especially hard to paint because of lighting conditions. Light, always a major problem, came from the entrance door below and my intervening body cast everything in front of me into deep shadow. For the next two panels it became necessary to depend almost entirely on artificial light. The disadvantage was the difficulty of judging colors in artificial light. This had some advantages, however, for no longer was work limited to clear weather or daylight hours. The upper panels could never have been completed during that Summer had I been solely dependent on daylight for work.

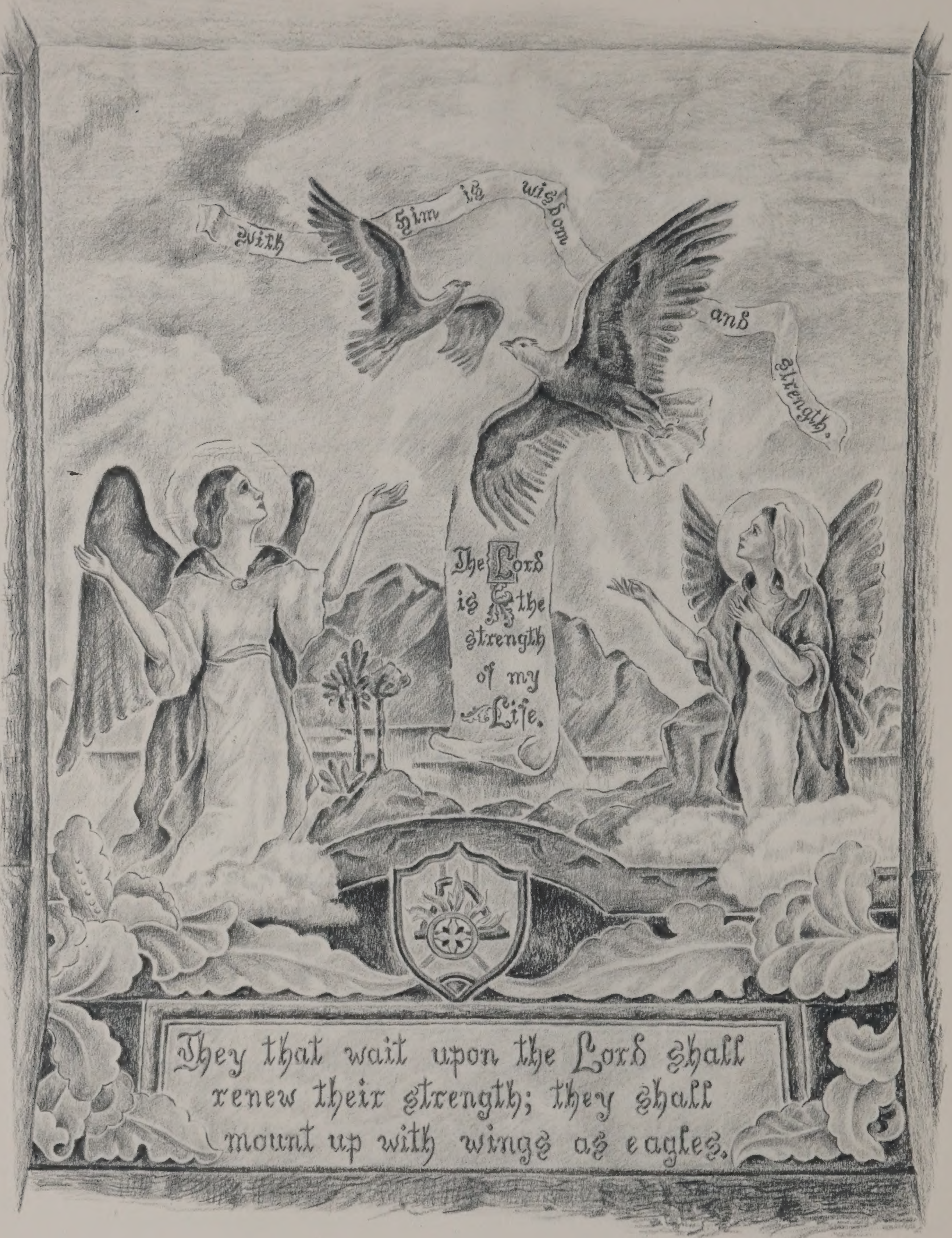
The eagles shown in this panel had a double significance for us. Long before we came to Björklunden, two bald-headed American eagles had located here and in the following years had moved their enormous nest many times to rebuild within the boundaries of our property. Old settlers tell us they have been here for over seventy years. Just the other day, Don and I on one of our walks must have come too close, for one of them swooped down at us, chattering with rage, a danger signal that it was well to heed.

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles," is the quotation found under this mural. This passage expresses the thought that with God's strength we are able to rise above all human limitations. Only the eagle, so they say, has the power to look directly into the sun. The two scrolls read . . . "The Lord is the strength of my life" (Psa. 27:1), and "With Him is wisdom and strength" (Job 12:13), and combined with the symbol within the emblem of a harp with rising flames, complete the ascending thought which the entire panel illustrates.

Each of these upper panels includes a thought related to the preceding one . . . "Wisdom" includes the understanding of Man's relationship to God, illustrated in the first of the upper panels; "Light" as spiritual vision includes the thought of wisdom and understanding. All panels represent the attributes of God, blessing mankind and lifting him higher and higher until he can join in the triumphant declaration of the Lord's Prayer, "For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever."

This spiritual climax I tried to embody in the last of the upper murals to which I now turned my attention. This is the panel of the "Angels of Praise" *(Page 65)*. We see it above the doorway as we turn to leave the Chapel, directly opposite the "Angels of Prayer." I wished to convey by this the prayerful attitude of seeking which we have when we enter and the joyful feeling of spiritual fulfillment which we have when we depart.

Above the door an angel holds an open Bible reading "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord." Every angel is shown playing some musical instrument expressing thankfulness and joy, even the six little ones marching down from the


With Him is wisdom and strength.
The Lord is the strength of my Life.

They that wait upon the Lord shall
renew their strength; they shall
mount up with wings as eagles.

clouds are blowing horns or clapping cymbals. On the scroll is found "Praise Him with trumpet. Praise Him with psaltery and harp. Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise the Lord."

The following week I worked breathlessly on this panel and in spite of the excessive heat so near the ceiling, work went well. Then, suddenly, things began to happen! One morning in the Chapel while Milt was consulting with me we heard screams of "FIRE!" In two bounds he was in the house, I after him. The electric stove in the kitchen was ablaze! Quickly he disconnected the current, putting out the fire but from then on one filament after another exploded. A major calamity for a family the size of ours with war restrictions that made it impossible to replace them. At this time Don was taken ill and for weeks I became day and night nurse. During this time I thought of Job! When Don recovered I was conscious of only two things, first, all was going well at home and in the War; and second, I could go back to work again in the Chapel.

The figures in this panel of Praise seemed to take form with the least amount of effort. The angel on the far right, blowing the double horns, looked like our daughter, Edith, and surely, another angel shown playing the lute, resembled a dear friend. One of the smaller figures at the bottom of the stairs, strumming a guitar, looked like our helper from a neighboring farm.

Being alone at this time meant freedom to work for I had only myself to consider and with the help of artificial light I painted from five in the morning until five at night. The warning that this was too rapid a pace came in a strange manner. The theme of some song, it could not even be identified, started singing in my mind. Day and night it persisted. I tried everything, sang Yankee Doodle, recited poetry, quoted verses of Scripture, anything to break the clamoring insistence of that cadence going on and on, repeating itself over and over again. Nothing seemed to help and wild thoughts came. Was this what happened in the brain of Robert Schuman? Sounds that drove him to the piano to write and write; themes from which he could not free himself? It was strange that I felt no physical fatigue. Finally, in desperation, I tried working an hour, resting an hour, working again and walking. Isaiah said "In returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be your strength." In due time strength came and the strange, haunting melody died away.

The beauty of that Fall will ever remain in my memory. Gradually the vivid coloring crept over the landscape, transforming the birches and maples into a flaming triumphant beauty. If this is the yearly death of the trees, then truly death is a glorious thing! Life is so full of deaths, the hour, the day, and the year. These do not trouble us for we have accepted time as a part of eternity. And so it is with the spirit which remains unchanged when the physical garment put on at birth is at length discarded.

Somehow, I was able to finish this panel of Praise before leaving for our Winter home. At last, the scaffolding came down and the six heavy pews were put into place. I slipped into one of them and sat quietly, trying to realize the importance of this milestone. I felt the need to evaluate the work of these past years before going further. Just what had we accomplished and what had we learned? Perhaps it would be better to ask what had our tools taught us for we had come to recognize that each medium of work has its own self-nature and it is necessary to search out its innermost secrets. Each chisel has its message to give the woodcarver, even the wood has something to say; each color directs the painter; each line reveals something to him who draws. Actually our tools told us how to work and we were learning to listen for their voices. We realized that anything accomplished is the result of an urge to work, the knowledge of how to work, a boundless patience and an abiding love that lifts work above self-expression and unifies it with the creative work of God.

These upper panels which were now completed represented the thought and effort of years. During that time we had lived with the consciousness of these panels; God and Man, Wisdom, Light, Spiritual Food, Trust, Love, Faith, God's Strength, Prayer and Praise. Gradually we came to recognize these as tools of God. The deep and profound inner experience of how to use them was revealed to us through the daily thought and work within the Chapel.

The completion of these panels was truly a milestone for now the Chapel seemed indeed a place for worship.

CHAPTER VII

SEVENTH SUMMER

1945

Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory.

I Corinthians 15:57

PEACE

How little did we realize as we tore off the last page of the calendar for 1944, that within six months our prayers would be answered, the battle won and the world at peace again, or so we were to believe. This unforgettable year dawned quietly, this year that will forever be written in the annals of history. For months there had been false rumors of a Germany near collapse. They became headlines for the moment, but before the ink was thoroughly dried, they would be changed or denied. Everywhere could be felt the tenseness of stoical waiting. Hope was held suspended while everyone went about his business.

Within our family important events were taking place. Our youngest daughter, Zanne, was married. Soon after that we had word of Ted's accident on his cruiser and subsequent hospitalization. Carl, we knew was in Brittany. Our great joy for that Christmas was that they were both alive.

Early in January an occasion took me to New York and gave me the opportunity of going on to Boston to interview Connick Associates. As makers of stained glass that organization is considered by many to be the finest in the United States, if not in the world. Our Chapel windows posed quite a problem. Except for the two in the Chancel and the one high above the entrance door, they were small and oblong, set lengthwise at the top of the four corner panels in the Nave. Although not intended to be specially featured they had to be given appropriate treatment. I had already experimented by rubbing colored chalk onto paper and then oiling it. Placed over the windows, these gave a surprising quality of light and richness of tone, and proved that any definite pattern of cross or figure conflicted with the designs of the frescoes, and the use of vivid, rich colors detracted from their mellow, muted tones.

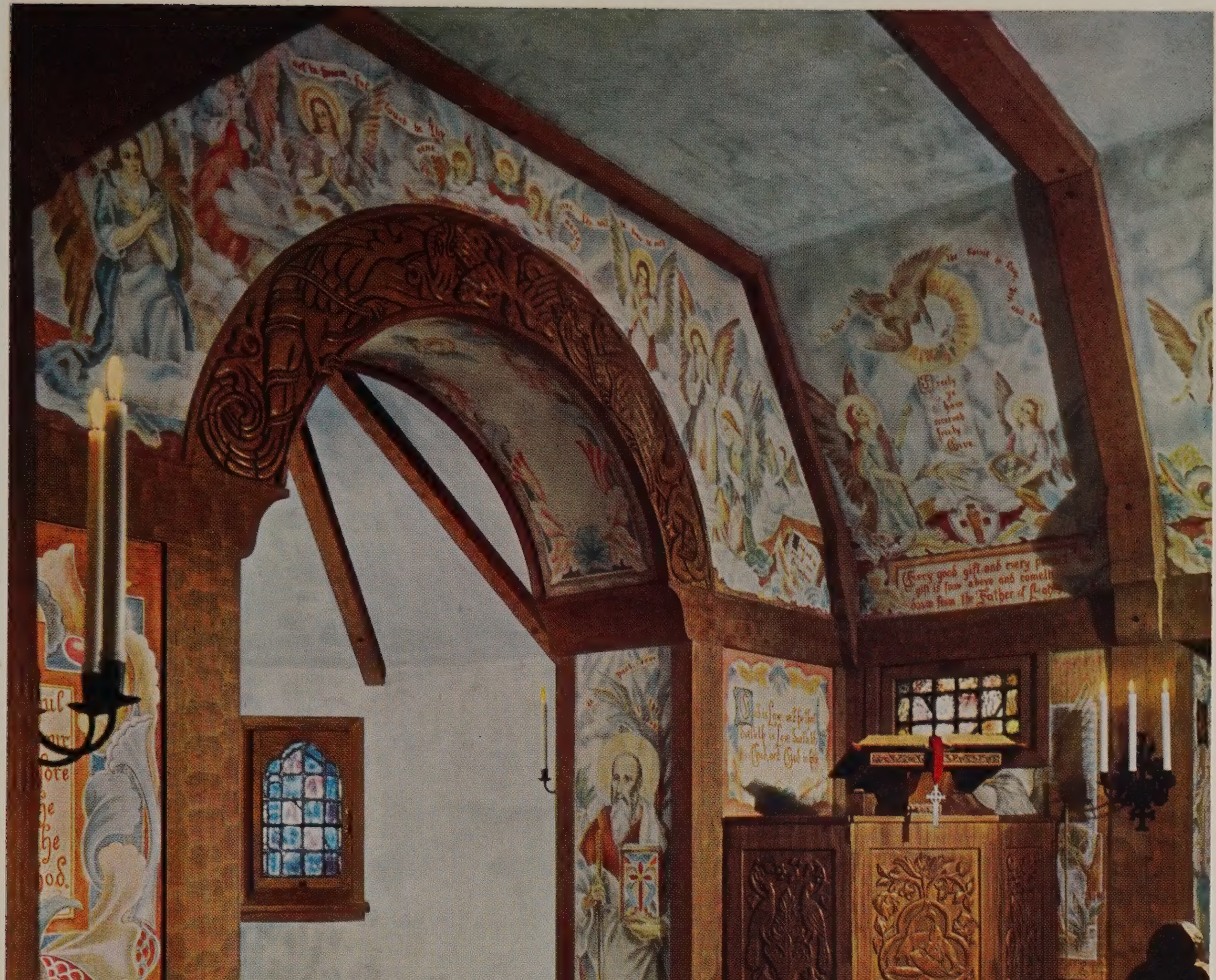
The response to our letter previously written to Connick Associates was most discouraging. Even assuming they could help with the windows, "no further orders could be filled until after 1949." This was a dismal prospect. Our only hope was to talk with them and show our colored slides and photographs. The Chapel told its own story and the response was immediate . . . "Mrs. Boynton, we will make them at once!" As we went through the plant we selected tones of handmade pot glass that blended with the murals in the Nave; and for the Chancel windows, where there were no murals, deeper shades were chosen. When the leaded frames of glass finally arrived at Björklunden the following year, we could scarcely wait to unpack them. Rushing over to the Chapel we held them in front of one window and then another to get the changing reflections of light as it came from different angles.

Don went to work. To mount all seven windows was a tricky business. No two were uniformly made and before slipping them into place it was necessary to chip off a little here and a little there within the frame. When at last the panes were held snugly in place with small glazier's brads, putty was spread smoothly around the edge. If Don had been a master glazier all his life, he could not have done a neater job. It was breath-taking to step into the Chapel when all were installed. Like translucent, glowing jewels, the small panes of glass within each window caught up and repeated the colors in the murals. The entire Chapel was bathed in a spiritual, mystic light.

That Winter amid the fast moving events of the world, work on the baptismal font progressed slowly but steadily. Carving classes were resumed on Monday nights, and, while Don continued carving the sixteen pedestal pieces, I worked on the third of the upper panels. The three figures in this panel represent Thomas, James the Less, and Matthew. Thomas, to this day, is the architect's Saint. With T-square in hand he is shown sitting at his drafting table. James the Less, believed to be the half-brother of Jesus, became Bishop of Jerusalem and is depicted in his clerical robes with miter and crozier. Matthew, the last figure, was a publican and a tax collector. He is shown turning away from his money bags, leaving all to follow Jesus.

I ran into many carving difficulties with these famous men. James the Less had to have one hand amputated, while Matthew had to be given a new wooden leg! He certainly seemed to have two of them when I made the design but one got lost in the flat perspective of carving. Don became expert in inserting little extra pieces of wood to be recarved and so well did he succeed that there is no evidence whatever that either James or Matthew had to undergo such serious operations.

Weeks before this panel was completed, preparations were being made for the next, the fourth and last panel. There remained then, Simon the Zealot, and Jude, usually called Thaddeus, and Judas Iscariot to complete the twelve Apostles. Legend identifies


Freely ye have received freely give
Every good gift and every
gift is from above and cometh
down from the Father of

the first two as either fishermen, contemporaries of Jesus, or Judean shepherds who saw the Christ star. Having already portrayed James the Great and Andrew as fishermen, I showed Simon the Zealot and Thaddeus as shepherds. The desire to include sheep in the design may have influenced this decision. One of Don's sisters had made a life's study of animals, using them as subjects for painting and woodcarving. Knowing little, myself, of the anatomy of sheep, I borrowed and adapted some of her designs for this panel. These two figures were soon ready to be carved. The problem here was how to portray the center figure of Judas. There was even the question of whether to use him at all; for he hanged himself directly after the Crucifixion, and therefore had never administered the rite of baptism. Matthias had been appointed to take his place. However, upon the advice of a trusted friend who was a minister and deeply interested in our work, Judas, chosen by Jesus as one of the original twelve was included.

After weeks of research, using accredited biographical material as well as the Bible, the character of Judas began to take a definite form far from the traditional. I could not believe him wholly evil. His nature, so full of darkness, had in it at least a ray of light. He loved and believed in Jesus but his mind could not open to receive His divine message. Other disciples, too, had found it difficult to grasp the meaning of a Spiritual Kingdom. Finally, in this lack of understanding and utter frustration, the tiny ray of light went out and in darkness his mind turned inward with a deep bitterness. If only he had proof, some tangible proof that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, the Holy One of Israel! He had witnessed the divine power Jesus used in saving others. Surely the Master would save himself as King of the Jews. So, I believed, reasoned Judas. Too late did that ray of light dawn again, clearly now, and realizing the awful significance of his betrayal Judas could not live on. What intense agony of spirit there must have been during this mental struggle before he hanged himself! Because I believed this to be true, Judas is portrayed as heartbroken, bowed down with grief. The moneybag, spilling out the despised thirty pieces of silver, lies at his feet. The tree beside the repentant figure represents that on which he hanged himself. Judas is the only Chapel figure portraying suffering and death.

By April the greater part of the baptismal font was completed. The cover had still to be made, but this could be done only after the whole font had been put together.

While the font was being assembled Don and I took an early trip to Björklunden. It was wonderful to be back again, to find the peace both within and without that always awaited us there. Everywhere else the whole world struggled in agony. During the month past every day had brought startling news. In April President Roosevelt died; the Russians entered Berlin; Goering was relieved as head of the German Air Force; the Italians captured Mussolini. It seemed that only at Björklunden could peace be found! Five minutes after our arrival Don and I were in the Chapel. It looked just the way we had hoped and prayed it would . . . peaceful and beautiful!

During this short week we were busy planning work for the coming Summer. Each of us had distinct and separate departments. Don had full charge of the "Forestry Department" while the "Paint Department" was mine. During the day we scarcely saw each other except at mealtime; but in the evening, reviewing our findings of the day before a blazing fire, we would rest our weary bodies full of contentment, our minds active with plans. Sometimes moments passed in silence, each so busy with his own thoughts. Then Don would sigh and say, "Really, if we transplanted trees the whole year around we still could not do all that should be done!" It seemed to me that the Lord had planted all that was necessary, but if they grew in the wrong spots Don felt a responsibility in rectifying the Lord's mistakes! Another long silence, then I would sigh and say, "Perhaps this year we need only paint the trim around the windows on the south and east side of the houses!"

Returning home again we found that the baptismal font had arrived in our absence. Rushing down to the carving room in the basement where it had been placed, we stood speechless. We looked at each other wonderstruck! Had *we* actually done this? We hardly recognized it as the work of our hands. A few days later our carving teacher and his wife came to see it, and he said in an awed voice, "There is not another like it in all the world!"

Soon after this came the eventful day when we heard the news of a complete German surrender. Although we had been expecting it for months, the definite assurance that war with Germany was over came with so great an impact that we were stunned. In silence we listened to President Truman, General Eisenhower, King George and others. It was the voice of Winston Churchill that finally brought the reality of this tremendous news. It was his voice we had heard through those dark days when the Allies' struggle for survival seemed hopeless. By his faith and strength he had seemed to hold together the courage of a nation and a large part of the world. What measure of joy must now be felt throughout Norway, Denmark, the smaller nations that had been ruthlessly crushed under the terrible Juggernaut of German power! Was hope being born again on this day? Our own hearts seemed too full for expression. Yet with all this emotional relief there was the sobering knowledge that our task was incomplete. The Japanese problem was still a deadly menace.

By the end of that memorable month of May we were again at work on the Chapel. How different it seemed without the scaffolding. When I opened the door in the early morning, the sun's rays seemed to focus on the Cross with the angel of Peace. The Altar was now completed even to the old Swedish Altar Cloth of white linen embroidered with a design of red cross-stitch. Hours of painstaking time had been spent in lengthening this cloth and crocheting lace for the edge to fit our Altar. Over this lay the fair linen on which a design of wheat, the symbol of the Bread of Life, had been embroidered. The symbol of the Wine, represented by the grape design, had previously been carved on the panels. In front of the railing was a long prayer cushion of red needlepoint which had been embroidered during the Winter. In due time I hoped to embroider four more kneeling cushions to go under the pews. The richness of these deep shades of red added depth to the coloring of the Chapel. Overhead the upper panels were now all completed. It seemed in the early stillness of each morning that Peace was already here.

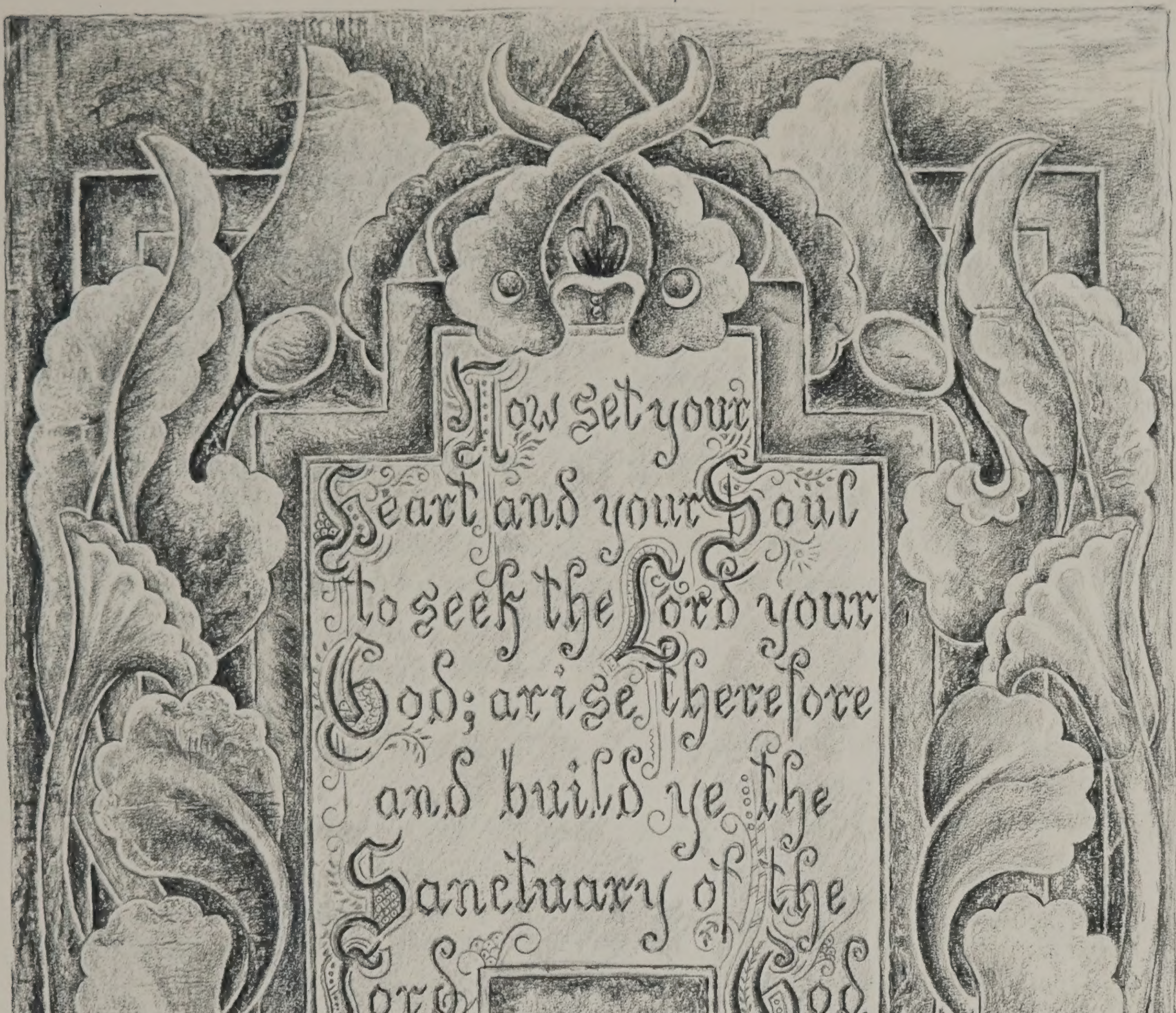
Symbolic designs of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John had been made some years ago and now I was ready to paint the one of Luke. The top of this panel is about seven and a half feet from the floor. No longer could I sit comfortably on a stool or on the scaffold platform. Now my feet must cling to the rungs of a ladder while one hand held a large palette and the other a paint brush. I seemed too far removed from the Darwinian conception of man to find this a comfortable position to maintain for hours.

The next panel to be painted was directly under that of Luke. From a purely physical standpoint these floor-panels were the most difficult to paint of all the panels in the Chapel. Sitting cross-legged, assuming Gandhi's favorite position, I would paint until every muscle in my back and legs cried out. Then, alternating with one that might be called the "knee, chest position," with my rear elevated to the highest possible point, my chest resting on my knees and my head resting on the floor, I would relieve the former aching muscles while blood rushed to my head and my ears pounded.

It was while painting this panel that I had unexpected visitors. Fortunately, the Gandhi position was being used when they arrived. They really were not at all welcome, for on that special morning it had seemed as though I never should be free to paint. The light coming from the door was blocked out and there stood two young people, hand in hand, peering awe-stricken into the Chapel. At first they did not see me sitting on the floor. Explaining that I had just managed to get started on my work, I asked if they would look around by themselves. For half an hour they sat quietly, then moving about they spied my grandmother's little melodeon. The young lady asked if she might play it. For the next half hour our three voices blended in happy unison. The Chapel had united our hearts as well as voices and soon they were telling me of themselves. He had been born in India, the son of a missionary, and she was teaching organ at the Hull House in Chicago. They were on their honeymoon and the Chapel seemed to them a benediction.

At this time we received a long letter from Carl, postmarked Antwerp, where he was then stationed. It went back to the beginning . . . to the time when he had landed in England, and for the first time told many of the experiences that had crowded into that short subsequent year. There was no mention of his return, but our hearts were so full of gratitude, that time meant nothing. We could wait.

Another panel combining Scripture with floral design came next, "Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God; arise therefore, and build ye the Sanctuary of the Lord God." This passage was the first to be selected for the Chapel and



Now set your
Heart and your Soul
to seek the Lord your
God; arise therefore
and build ye the
Sanctuary of the
Lord God.

seemed almost a personal command. As dawn sent rosy shafts of light from behind the water's dark rim at the hour when I crept silently over to work at the Studio, this thought went with me. It was difficult to decide during those mystic early hours, whether I was lifted to another plane of understanding, or whether those same shafts of light reached down to illumine the dark corners of my mind.

Before continuing further with painting, the problem of wood-finish had to be met. Too long had this been put aside for the more interesting work of the murals. For various reasons four different kinds of wood had been selected for carving. Scandinavian peasants in the olden days, working as we have done, would not have been able to secure a large amount of selected lumber. They would have used wood that was at hand. We were following along the same path, not only because of tradition, but due to war priorities in lumber. Then too, each type of wood presents different problems. Since we were inexperienced carvers, we wanted to learn how to meet all problems. White pine has little grain, and is therefore easy to carve. Gumwood, firmer fibered than pine, has eccentricities of grain that keep one constantly alert. It dives down here and comes up there in a most disconcerting manner. Oak, though a hardwood, has a reliable grain and never disappoints. Butternut is a satiny, lovely wood for carving, but unless one has razor-edged tools it grows what I call "whiskers." Sharper tools are needed to carve butternut than oak.

For the next three weeks we made endless experiments in wood-finishes in order that the tone of these different woods could blend together without losing their individual characteristics. Having learned by sad experience that the lightest of stains can become dark when used on carved wood various stains were tried on roughly carved samples. All six pews were up-ended and the underside used for experiments.

Gumwood presented the most problems. Even clear linseed oil brought out a startling red tone that clashed violently with the mellow tones of the other woods. In my diary at this time I find the philosophical statement, "After weeks of experimenting I am at least eliminating a lot of finishes that are *not* satisfactory." And a few days later, "Think, at long last, I have found the right combination to kill the red of the gumwood." After applying the stain, rottenstone was rubbed into the wood with the final finish of beeswax mixed with turpentine. The last took days and weeks of polishing and was the hardest manual labor I had done since the sanding of the ceiling.

About this time, friends vacationing nearby telephoned asking to see the Chapel. They were put off until the final day before their departure since I hoped by then to have the work completed and everything in order. When the day dawned the Altar railing and pulpit had yet to be treated. An SOS was sent to Milt, who helped with the railing while I worked on the pulpit, and by noon the upper part was finished but not the lower which could only be done lying flat on the floor. Putting a pillow under my stomach I worked strenuously with one hand, and when that was numb, I tried the other. Hot and exhausted, I rested a moment and moved the pillow under my head. Sometime later I awoke to hear a deep bass voice saying, "What an odd place to take a nap!" I roused and looked up to find three strangers gazing down at me in astonishment.

The baptismal font was left for the last. Not only was I fearful lest it be spoiled in finishing, but everyone else joined in pessimistic warnings. Samples of oak were roughly carved and various finishes applied with the result that an ancient formula was used. The entire font was washed with diluted ammonia, thereby lightening the dark grain which with its zebra-like markings had interfered with the form and design of the figures. Now this was blended into the natural wood tone. After rinsing thoroughly with clear water, a stiff brush was attached to the electrical Handee to wear down the edges of the wood. This, we were told, would be equivalent to about one hundred years of wear and handling. It fairly aged before our eyes. The last coat of beeswax with hours and hours of polishing resulted in a soft velvety patina. Our anxieties were over! The font had not been ruined. We gave it a "coming-out party" and all who came rejoiced with us.

While my work was centered in the Chapel, the world events moved on. President Truman announced the new secret weapon of the atomic bomb, a fearful, deadly instrument with the greatest destructive force in history. According to the President its use, terrible as it is, would speed the end of war. Three days after Hiroshima Russia declared war on Japan. A futile gesture in the light of after events.

The following days were too tense with possibilities of world peace for us to do any concentrated work in the Chapel. The three radios scattered throughout the house were all reporting last minute news. During hurried trips to market the radio in the car carried on from the last words heard in the house. One day returning with a carload of guests we rushed to the radio just in time to hear the deep toned voice of "Big Ben" booming from the House of Parliament. Silenced for these many years it now pealed triumphantly . . . WAR WAS OVER!! Peace had come at last for all the heart-torn weary world! We heard the music of "God Save the King" and "The Star-Spangled Banner." Each of us was so overwhelmed with emotion that no one saw the other's tears of joy. Finally, I turned to one of our guests and asked, "Have you any sons in the war?" Quietly she answered, "Yes, our only son is at Okinawa." Okinawa! What must peace mean to her! We went to the Chapel and in that stillness we seemed to hear "Yes, peace is here, has always been here, for God is here. Accept this peace within yourselves for 'the whole earth is now at rest and is quiet.' "

How different everything seemed when I returned to work! We had become so accustomed to the heavy weight of war that we had forgotten how full of buoyancy life could be when that weight was lifted. The two smaller panels behind the pulpit were next to be painted. One was St. John the Evangelist, symbolized by an eagle, and the other was the Scriptural passage, "God is Love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Work on these could only be done kneeling on the floor of the pulpit. One day, while working I looked up to see a woman in the doorway gazing upward. In awed surprise she was murmuring, "Oh . . . OH . . . OOHH!!" Trying not to frighten her I said, as my head bobbed up above the high pulpit. "I'm here!" But that poor lady was quite sure that she had both seen and heard a ghost!

The difficulty of painting on my knees was as nothing compared to the discomfort of the next two panels underneath the pulpit where I had to lie flat! In time these two were completed and the stiffness of newly discovered muscles disappeared.

At this time the Chapel had the first of many significant services, an early morning "Victory Service." Within this little Sanctuary of Peace our overflowing thankfulness could find expression. Together we prepared the service in which everyone participated. We had no ordained leader and the order of the service was typed for each of the thirty guests. The Chapel was sketched on the cover of each folder and under the heading of "Victory Service, Björklunden Chapel, August 26th, 1945" was the quotation from Matthew: "Where two or three are gathered together, in My Name, there am I in the midst of them."

Together on that bright Summer morning we took the path leading to the little Chapel. The door was open and the music of the organ grew louder as we approached. The sun streaming through the high east window lighted up the "Angels of Prayer." With all our hearts we sang "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." The Litany followed . . .

The Lord will give strength unto His people.
The Lord will bless His people with Peace.

Thanks be to God which giveth us the Victory!

They shall beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation
shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

Thanks be to God which giveth us the Victory!

We pray that Thou wouldst "give light to them
that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,"
and that Thou wouldst "guide our feet
in the way of Peace."

Thanks be to God which giveth us the Victory!

Voices quavering with emotion gradually grew stronger as we sang "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty. Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee." A reading of the ninety-sixth Psalm followed the hymn "Oh sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth." With the new song of Peace singing in our hearts, we sang the Crusaders' hymn "Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all Nature," a song of the meadows and the woodlands that surround the Chapel.

Together we repeated the Lord's Prayer . . . "For Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever and ever." And then followed the Benediction "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, and be ye thankful." "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; . . . singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; The Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee PEACE."

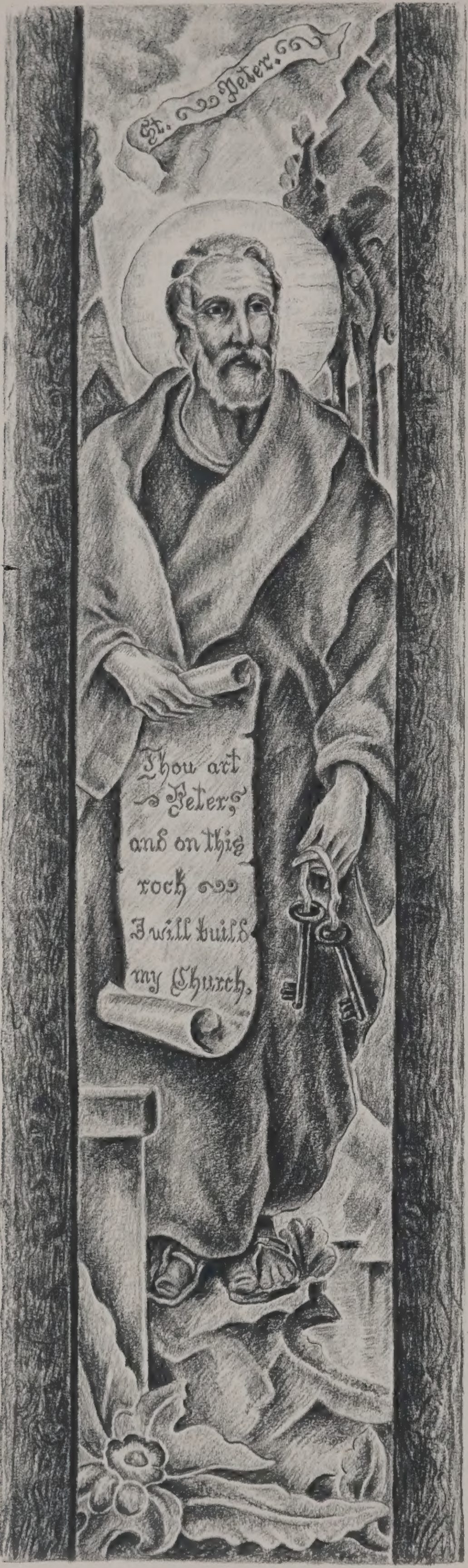
The days were passing quickly and there was still much to be done before turning homeward. I was eager to paint the panels of Peter and Paul. It was Walt's idea to have these two important Apostles on the two side panels (17 inches wide and nearly 8 feet high) between the Nave and the Chancel. Together they built the church of Christ . . . Peter with the tools of his heart, and Paul with the tools of his great intellect. The existence of our little Chapel is due to the very fact that they builded well.

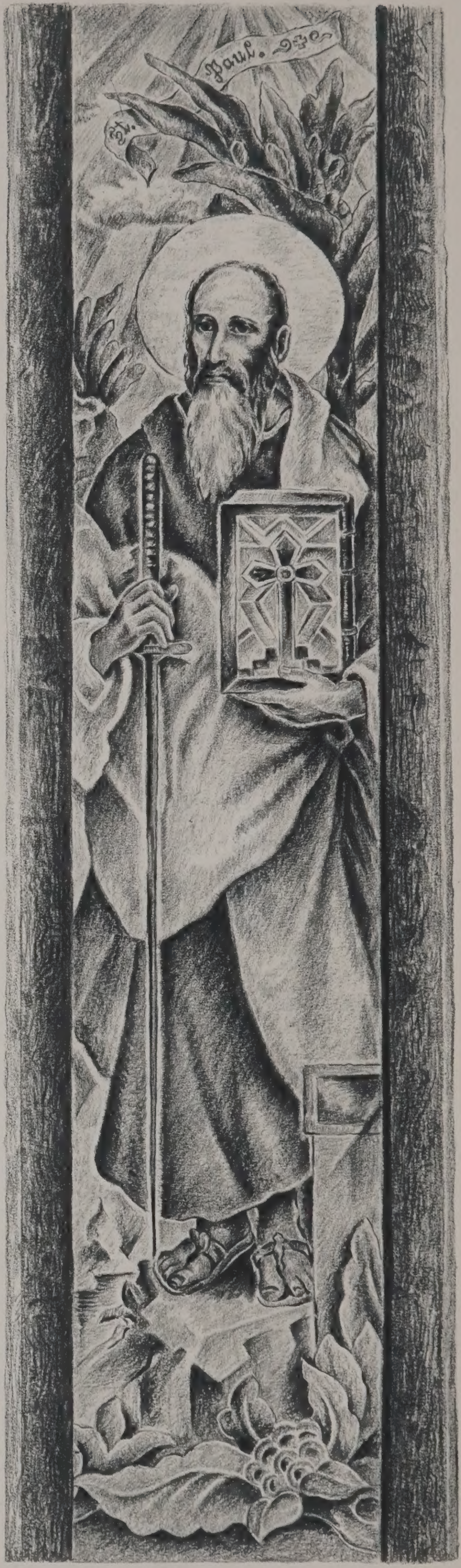
Fortunately, through the centuries, tradition established their physical characteristics, as well as their divergent personalities. Days and weeks were spent in the study of these two remarkable characters. They became as real to me as full-blooded men of today; and, returning each year to the Chapel, I go to them now as to dear friends.

Tradition has portrayed Peter as a handsome old man, "with a broad lofty forehead and rather coarse features, an open undaunted countenance, short gray hair and beard." He was "remarkable for his fervor and energy rather than sustained power." We are told further that he was impulsive and warmhearted. Peter loved and believed in Jesus without understanding the divine Principle of His teachings. This knowledge came to him later with a clear vision after Christ's ascension. We weighed carefully all the information concerning Peter and part of it we tried to use in our portrayal of him.

In our design Peter is shown holding two keys. Jesus said to Peter, "I will give thee the keys to the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." From this, it would seem that the keys are the symbolic implements of Truth and Faith which unlock the fetters that bind us.

On the scroll held in Peter's right hand is written, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church." Talking with His disciples, Jesus asks, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" and they answered, "Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." He saith unto them, "But whom say ye that I am?" And Peter, the impulsive lovable Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but thy Father which is in Heaven." Then follows the affirmation used in our mural "Thou art Peter and upon this


St. Peter.
Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church.


St. Paul.

rock I will build My Church." Peter's intuitive understanding that Jesus Christ was indeed the Son of the living God may well be interpreted as the rock of Truth on which the Church of God is built.

During the next few weeks Peter and I worked together. In our panel he is not quite life-size. His deep-set eyes, and short bushy gray whiskers and gray hair give him a striking appearance. On the whole I had little trouble in painting him; only, in fact, with his two extremities. After completing his head I realized that his eyes looked one way and his nose another, but I finally succeeded in making them both face due north. This was nothing as compared to the difficulty I had with his right big toe. This foot was partly concealed behind a low pillar with only the big toe showing around the corner. Every time Don came into the Chapel he patiently removed shoes and stockings to pose while I worked. Don has such strong feet I could not understand why my effort proved so unsuccessful. This problem was finally solved by changing the angle of the foot to include more toes. As simple as that! Now Peter has three toes showing from behind the pillar and all is well.

The sparse entries in my diary during those weeks are both revealing and amusing as I read them today. On September fifteenth I find: "Finished Peter *very* tired." Next day: "Started Paul. So excited!"

Paul presented no problems. He looks in our mural the way I believe the real Paul did . . . kind, stern, and intelligent. In his right hand, as a militant, he holds the sword, the sword of the Spirit; and as the great teacher and writer he holds the Bible in his left hand. It has been wisely said that of all the followers of Jesus none made so great a contribution to the thinking of mankind as Paul.

There was much information available in studying the characteristics of Paul. Physically he was small and was definitely not handsome, being bald, with a high and bulging forehead. We are told that he had "an aquiline nose that overshadowed his upper lip, a pointed graying beard; that his eyes gave forth a hot light of frustrated longing and the fallen cheeks spoke of patient waiting." As I read about Paul I found definite conclusions forming in my mind that did not seem to agree with accepted tradition. His seemed to be a burning zeal, not a "frustrated longing." He did not sound frustrated when he wrote the ninth Chapter of first Corinthians . . . "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain more." He had the penetrating insight to see beyond limitations, and the courage and power to follow his vision. Perhaps he was "frustrated" at times. This is a modern word for a normal condition. Frustration rightly used gives added force. It is the dammed up stream that generates the vast power of electricity. What did Paul do with this supposed frustration? He worked, he wrote, he prayed; and, as a result, the finest letters ever written have come down to us. These letters, so full of spiritual beauty, courage, faith and love for all humanity, are an inspiration to everyone who reads them today.

From the moment of his conversion on the road to Damascus, when he saw a light from heaven and heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" and Saul answered, "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?" he never wavered nor faltered. Paul had suffered deeply in arriving at his unwavering belief in the living Christ and through this suffering had gained wisdom, tolerance and understanding.

We are told that Paul worked with his great intellect, but his tools must have been fashioned by love. No one could have written the thirteenth Chapter of the first Corinthians with an intellect only . . . "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity (love), I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." And again, in Ephesians . . . "Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; . . . being rooted and grounded in love" . . . "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge."

When I turn to greet the Paul in our Chapel and look into those keen, sharp eyes, I know there is as great a heart to understand simple human frailty as there is to grasp the loftiest concepts of life. All this and more I feel when I talk with him. There may be other Peters and other Pauls but the two I know and love are living in our Chapel.

CHAPTER VIII

EIGHTH SUMMER

1946

Happiness is neither within us only,
or without us, it is the union of
ourselves with God.

Pascal

FULFILLMENT

SUMMER, that year, seemed shy and reluctant about joining us, warming up one day only to turn cold and rainy the next. Painting in the Chapel was not possible. However, there was other preliminary work that could be done in the meantime. The melodeon bench, carved during the Winter, was stained a dark mahogany to match the melodeon; the Bible-holder to match the pulpit, and both were put into place. What vivid memories they brought! My maternal grandfather and grandmother Prentiss had stood beside this little melodeon singing the old Cantata of "Esther, Esther, beauteous Queen," with lurid details of hanging Haman on gallows fifty cubits high. Grandfather was a Congregational minister and came west with his little bride some years before the Civil War. The ancestral Bible, now open on the pulpit, contains notations, in my parents' familiar handwriting, of the births and deaths of all the family. Little by little everything was finding its rightful place, the past was becoming one with the present.

And now it had become the custom in our family, even as in my childhood, to foregather every Sunday afternoon to sing hymns. Gradually friends joined us in the Chapel. Often Mrs. Peil, coming from services at her Lutheran church would appear at our Chapel door, her arms full of flowers. Looking around she would invariably say . . . "Oh, Mrs. Boynton, you have for you a monument already builded!" And then, remembering her flowers . . . "See you, from my Kirche to yours bring I flowers!"

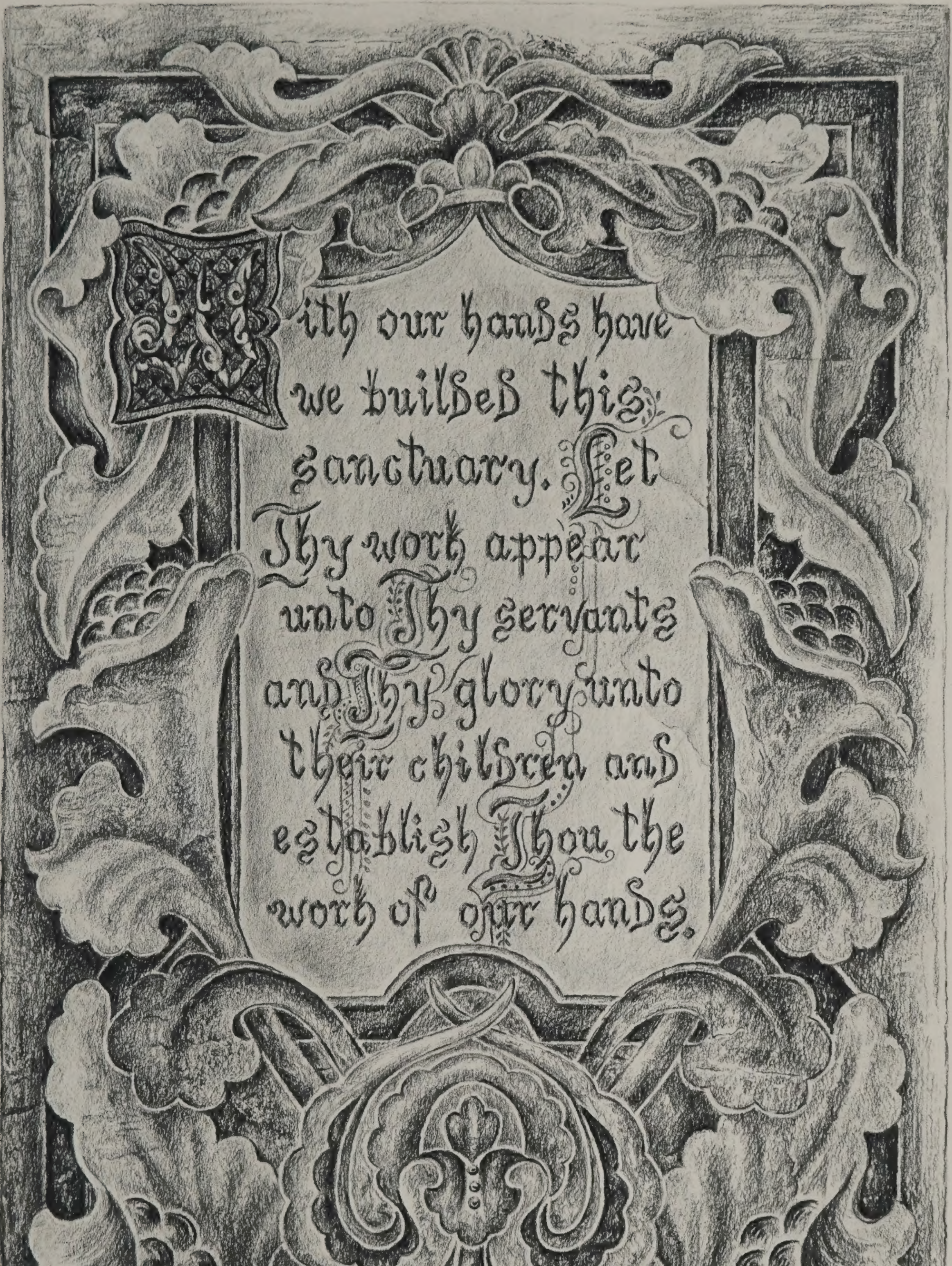
One happy day I was called to the phone and suddenly I heard Carl! Carl was home again! His voice sounded so near, so wonderful, that joy kept me speechless. There was so much to say but we could not get beyond, "How are you Carl?" and "Mother, Mother, how are you?" The fact that we both answered, "Fine, dear, just fine" did not matter so much as the reassurance that all was well at last! He planned to come here sometime in August for a long visit. Everything seemed a little blurred as I hung up the receiver and found my way to the Chapel. Within these walls echoed the prayers of many years for Carl's safety and now these same walls heard the heart's overflowing gratitude.

An occasional warm day permitted the tracing of a few designs on the Chapel walls, but as yet no continued work could be done. When the happy day arrived and all was in readiness for painting, love for my husband sidetracked me for another three weeks. Very near to his heart was a two-wheeled cart he had spent years in acquiring. He wanted it painted like the picturesque little carts in Sicily, but this must be done with a strong Scandinavian accent. I could not disappoint him. Several undercoats of bright red paint were given; and, while these dried, designs illustrating the various prospective activities of the cart were made. The two long panels on either side were divided into three sections. Its first job would probably be carrying spades, trowels, plants and flowers to the garden. Since our garden included Mrs. Peil, she is shown in the first section in two familiar attitudes. A broad-brimmed hat on the back of her head, her feet encased in men's carpet slippers, a pail in one hand and a long fork in another she is shown striding with mammoth steps toward the garden gate. And again, beyond the low wall, this time with a rearview exposure, she is bending from the waist like a jack-knife, her long woolen stockings rippling over her spindly legs, while she plants her beloved annuals.

The cart's next experience might be carrying wood. Don and Milt, in gay Swedish suits with yellow knee-pants, long blue coats and high hats, are shown in the middle section wielding a cross-cut saw, preparing a big log for hauling. There was no question that one of the main duties for the cart would be to carry laundry from the caretaker's lodge to the main house. With this in mind, Milt's wife, gayly dressed in Swedish costume, is shown hanging up the washing. The Stabburr, a typical Norwegian grain house on which our caretaker's house was modeled, is shown in the background and in the foreground their small son is marching off to school with Jigger and Paddle at his heels.

The designs on the other side relate to the daily tasks of toting provisions for our big household. In the first section, the cook is shown in front of a traditional, painted buffet bearing on a platter a huge, steaming ham. The center panel shows Don and me, with all six children seated around our long refectory table, the ubiquitous Jigger and Paddle are in the foreground. In the last section the little second-maid is serving a high piled Swedish dessert meringue. A traditional flower design is painted on either end of the cart.

Finally the cart was finished and at long last paints were assembled and work in the Chapel began again. Ten months had elapsed since paint brushes were put away and although the panel of our Dedication presented no technical problems, everything seemed strange and difficult. Apparently I was not yet "in my stride" as Don puts it. His faith in the length and strength of my stride is always a challenge. This panel seemed



With our hands have
we builded this
sanctuary. Let
Thy work appear
unto Thy servants
and Thy glory unto
their children and
establish Thou the
work of our hands.

a very important one to us. After a quiet searching within ourselves, we combined our own words with the appropriate ones taken from Psalms . . . "With our hands have we builded this Sanctuary. Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants and Thy glory unto their children and establish Thou the work of our Hands."

With this completed, the other transept panel of the Archangel Raphael and the Peaceable Kingdom was started. Six years ago this design had been made as a companion panel for the Archangel Gabriel and the Unicorn. How long ago it seemed! Since then twenty-four panels had been completed. At that time I took a safari, hunting wild animals and tame, through libraries and museums, as the anatomy of the animals mentioned in Isaiah was not familiar to me. Now, one by one, the animals in our Peaceable Kingdom seemed to come alive and took on such spiritual expressions that it was really quite amusing. Even Jigger and Paddle, who were included, seemed to acquire angelic expressions. Jigger had been my constant companion during the years of work in the Chapel. She would stare fixedly at first one panel and then another as I painted, and now, this one seemed of special interest to her. Questioningly, and even a little wistfully, she gazed at the shining coat and slender form of this strangely familiar Irish setter, as if to say, "I am afraid my portrait flatters me!"

One morning, it happened to be on a Friday, and work was progressing nicely, when I heard Edith's excited voice calling, "Mother, Mother, how would you like to have luncheon with President Truman in Washington on Tuesday?" Standing on the ladder, I looked down at her with amazement and some alarm. Quietly I said, "Edith, what is the matter?" Equally controlled she answered, "Mother, you had better get down from there and read this telegram." Obediently I climbed down. A many-worded telegram it was! As sponsor of the U.S.A. carrier Bunker Hill which I had christened in 1943, I was invited to "attend the ceremony of a Unit Citation for ships of this class rendering outstanding service during the war." Thinking only of my work in the Chapel and of household responsibilities, I said, "How wonderful, but of course I cannot think of going." But Don, reading the wire exclaimed, "Of course you are going and I am going with you. This is the climax to a wonderful experience for us both. We must not miss it!" How right he was!

It was a bright sunny day when we arrived in Washington. On the south lawn of the White House the citation ceremony began. As the President read the long list of major battles in which the Bunker Hill had participated, there flashed through our minds the events associated with the ship's achievements . . . the breath-taking moment when it slipped down the ways . . . the eager, tense faces of the crew the day of the Commissioning . . . the shocking news of the almost fatal bombing of the ship two years later. The ceremony was deeply moving, for we all knew that this citation honored the hundreds of men who had passed from the ship into the valley of death as well as those who had survived.

Returning to Björklunden I resumed work eagerly on the panel of the Peaceable Kingdom *(Page 27)*. I was so anxious to have it completed before Carl arrived. The figure of the Christ Child took form with the least amount of effort. Such a precious wide-eyed Child of innocence. I loved every minute of painting Him. The wings of the Archangel Raphael enfold this radiant little figure. Garbed in a pilgrim's robe and carrying a staff, Raphael hovers protectively over the Christ Child.

It was fascinating to watch each figure become itself, with its individual characteristics, no matter who might be the model. No one would recognize Raphael's hand, holding the staff, as Milt's! When I seemed to be having trouble with this hand, I heard the lawn mower close by and asked Milt to step in for a moment. A broomstick serving as a staff, the hand quickly took proper shape. How fortunate to have so large and varied a family on which to call!

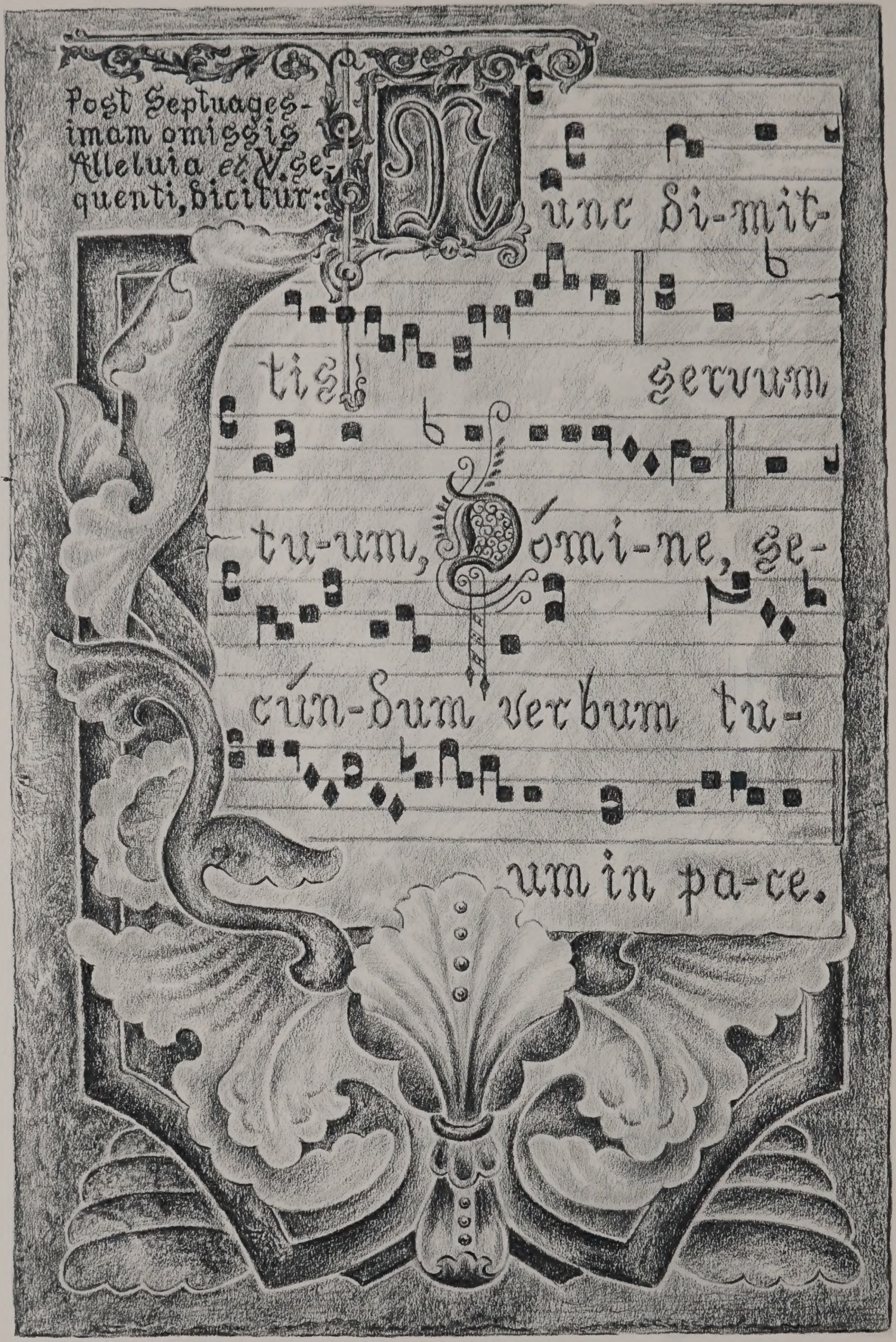
Whenever a panel is almost finished little imperfections loom up as though spotlighted. The last touches were being added when I heard the honk of a car . . . a *very* insistent honk. I looked out and there was Carl! Hale and hearty but changed in some indefinable way. Don came later that afternoon. No words could express the joy of our reunion. In the evening we went over to the candle-lighted Chapel, our hearts at peace. Later by the fire we talked of his experiences over the past four years and of his plans for the future.

The following days were full of quiet contentment, working and talking together with no realization of the ticking of time. The joy of painting seemed to be contagious. Stepping back to get a long view of my work, I looked out of the Chapel to see Carl wearing my green smock, perched on a camp stool under the trees completely absorbed in painting a corner view of the house. At that time I was working on the panel of Matthew and I used Carl's hands as a model. It is a little confusing now when I look at this panel. Matthew is entirely himself, but his hands are the familiar ones I have known for over thirty years.

Gradually the Chapel was becoming known and people from an ever widening circle asked to visit it. A group studying religious symbolism came; another studying art. One group was interested in Boy Scout activities. They had supervised the building of a Chapel by a chapter of the Boy Scouts and were seeking ideas for further development.

About that time the first Communion Service was celebrated in our Chapel by a Summer resident minister in a nearby village who had been keenly interested in the progress of our Chapel over the past years. To those of us who took part in this meaningful service, it seemed a culmination of the ever growing spirit of the Chapel in the unification of beauty and spiritual truth.

During the two final months of that Summer my painting materials were moved back and forth from the Chapel to the Studio five different times. It seemed quite evident that now the Chapel's activities would take precedence over my efforts to paint.


Post Septuages-
imam omissis
Alleluia et V. se-
quenti, dicitur:
Nunc di-mit-
tis servum
tu-um, Dómi-ne, se-
cún-dum verbum tu-
um in pa-ce.

Two more panels were finished that Summer. Standing on planks laid over two high horses I painted the narrow panel under the arch between Peter and Paul, with an adorable cherub directly overhead. The last panel was the Gregorian canticle beginning with the words, "Nunc dimittus." A wonderful Summer it had been with Carl's return and the comforting knowledge of Ted's ultimate recovery. In our hearts we could fervently repeat these words, "Lord, now lettest Thou, Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word."

CHAPTER IX

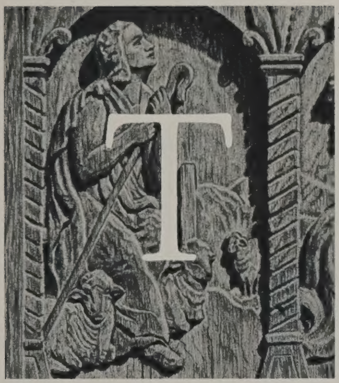
NINTH SUMMER

1947

And the Lord said . . . I have hallowed
this house, which thou hast built.

I Kings 9:3

CONSECRATION



THERE is an old Norwegian adage which expressed our sentiments as we started the new year of 1947. “Sol ute, sol inne; Sol i hjärtat, sol i sinne,” meaning . . . “Sun outside, sun inside; sun in your heart, sun in your mind.” For us the sun was shining everywhere! Our children were finding homes and living their own lives, some near, some far; but distance meant nothing and happiness everything.

It was almost like Summer that day late in May when we arrived at Björklunden. The Chapel was beautiful. Peace was there and we were so ready and eager for it. Attuned to the rhythmic harmony of Nature’s peace, it seemed to flow into us as naturally as the sun flows through the trees of our forest.

Again Mrs. Peil reminded me that the time for the planting of the garden had come. Together we drove to the florist, some twenty miles distant, where the plants had been ordered. Mrs. Peil talked every moment both coming and going. It was like a faucet turned on and left running. Half English and half German, it was difficult for me to understand anything she said. “The Roosians” were evidently causing her great distress of mind as they were everyone else. But when we arrived she was all joy and paddled back and forth between the rows of cold-frames, suggesting additional flowers for our garden. Nothing is more heart-warming than a visit to a nursery. Long forgotten flowers bloom instantly in one’s mind by the mere sight of a printed name on an empty seed envelope. We had a busy hour choosing everything that pleased her most. Occasionally, I would suggest a flower; but she would say, “Oh, Mrs. Boynton, the beds are too full already yet.” But let her eye light on a pet spiderwort or mammoth marigold and the limitations of the garden were completely forgotten.

It is difficult for me to recognize these baby seedlings; therefore, as each species was wrapped in paper I tried to write the name on a package. But it was not easy. Salpiglossis, scabiosa, and others, pronounced with a thick German accent are something to recognize! Imagine my surprise when "Potlikker" and "Flax" turned out to be portulaca and phlox! Planting started soon after luncheon. First there was too much sun; then, too much wind. The tender little wisps had to be grasped firmly until the roots were pressed down into the ground or the wind would whisk them off. Soon black clouds piled ominously and thunder warned us of what was coming. Working frantically at top speed we forgot aching backs and bruised knees. The passage from I Corinthians, although related to Paul's efforts to establish a church rather than to plant a garden, ran through my mind . . . "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." All but the loose odds and ends were in the ground when the storm broke and we scurried for cover. Now there was nothing to do but let "God give the increase." Certainly it would take no less than the Almighty to make strong, healthy plants out of these tender baby seedlings.

There was only one blot on the rosy horizon. My eyes seemed to have declared a sit-down strike. Perhaps there had been, during the Winter, too much woodcarving under the fluorescent light, or too much needle-point. The long Prayer-cushion in front of the Altar railing had been finished, as well as a cushion for the melodeon stool and a small one in front of the Altar. The first of four kneeling cushions, nine feet long by ten inches wide, to go under the pews, had been started but had to be put aside. My loss turned out a gain when three of my dearest friends and my sister took over this task with joy. They had long wanted some tangible expression of their love for the Chapel.

It was not possible to paint in the dark, and light seemed to start pain throbbing in my eyes. No work had been done in the Chapel. It was difficult to rid myself of the fear that with only six more panels to be painted, this work of my heart's desire might have to remain unfinished. During the weeks following, the Chapel heard many prayers that nothing could interfere with its completion. No unfinished symphony, dear Lord! Little by little, alternating work with rest in the dark, my eyes were healed.

The first panel to be painted was to the right of the door . . . "Ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace. The mountains and hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands . . . for My Presence will go with you." This became our Portal Benediction and after every service it is our custom to turn and read it together before leaving the Chapel. Whatever your problems, whatever your frame of mind might be on entering, as you turn to leave, there is joy in your heart and peace.

While working on this panel I could see Don and Milt going back and forth endless times making great preparation for hoisting the two hundred pound bell into the belfry. This was entirely Don's project on which he had been working for six years. The bell was part of his boyhood memories. Purchased in 1893 by his father, it was made by an American firm for the Columbian Exposition, and was one of the first to compete with English bell-metal, which up to that time had been largely used.

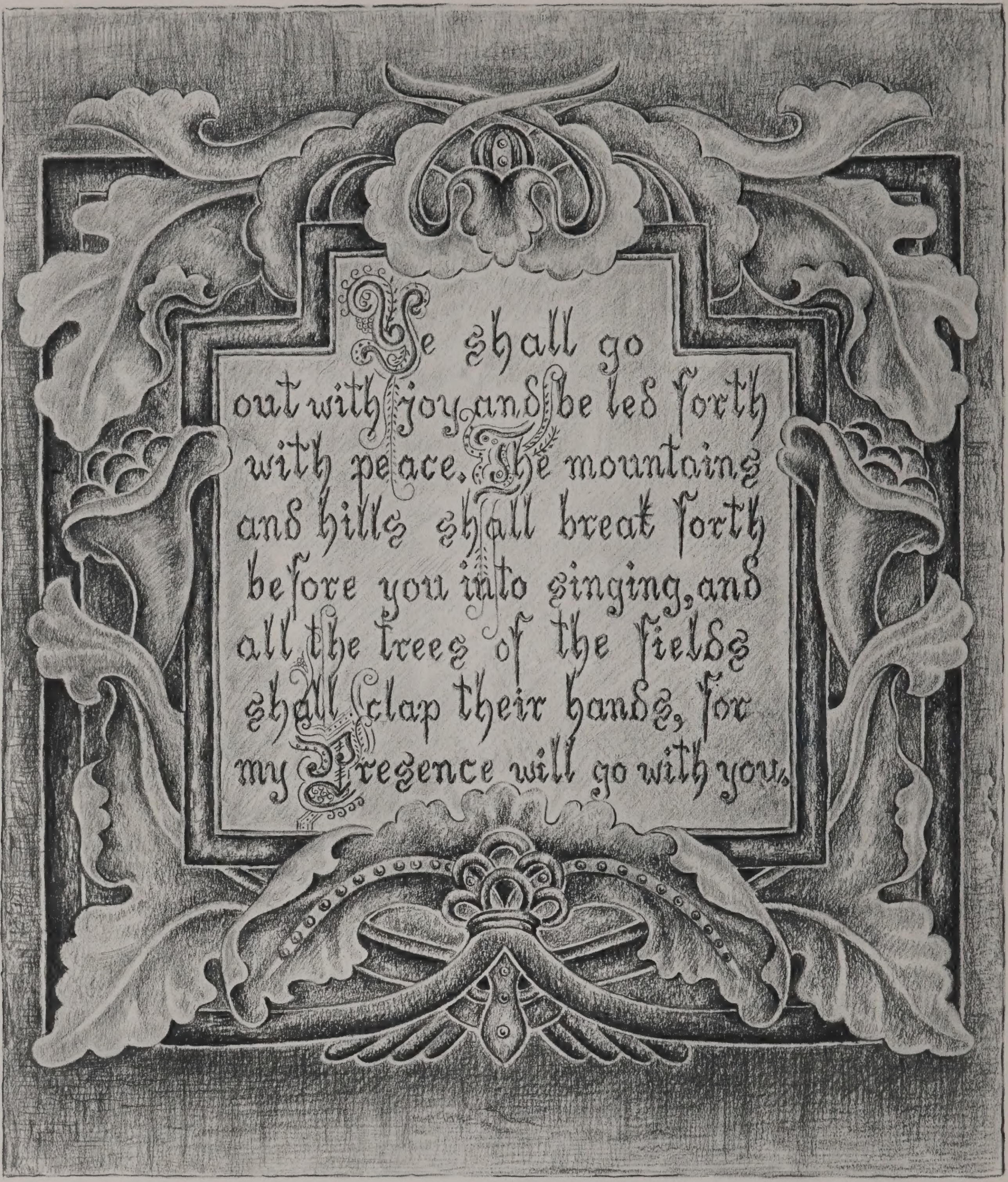
Every detail was carefully worked out before Don undertook any project. Before the installation of the bell, it had been completely assembled in the garage to be sure that nothing was missing and that everything fitted perfectly together.

A strong scaffolding, made of our own sturdy trees, had first to be built. There was the bustle and clatter of a major operation as Don and Milt lugged things back and forth from the garage to the Chapel. A new service had been found for the gay little red-painted cart. Now it was filled with everything from nails to planks, even including a cushion for comfort when riding astride the ridgepole. Don's convictions are for "all out preparedness!"

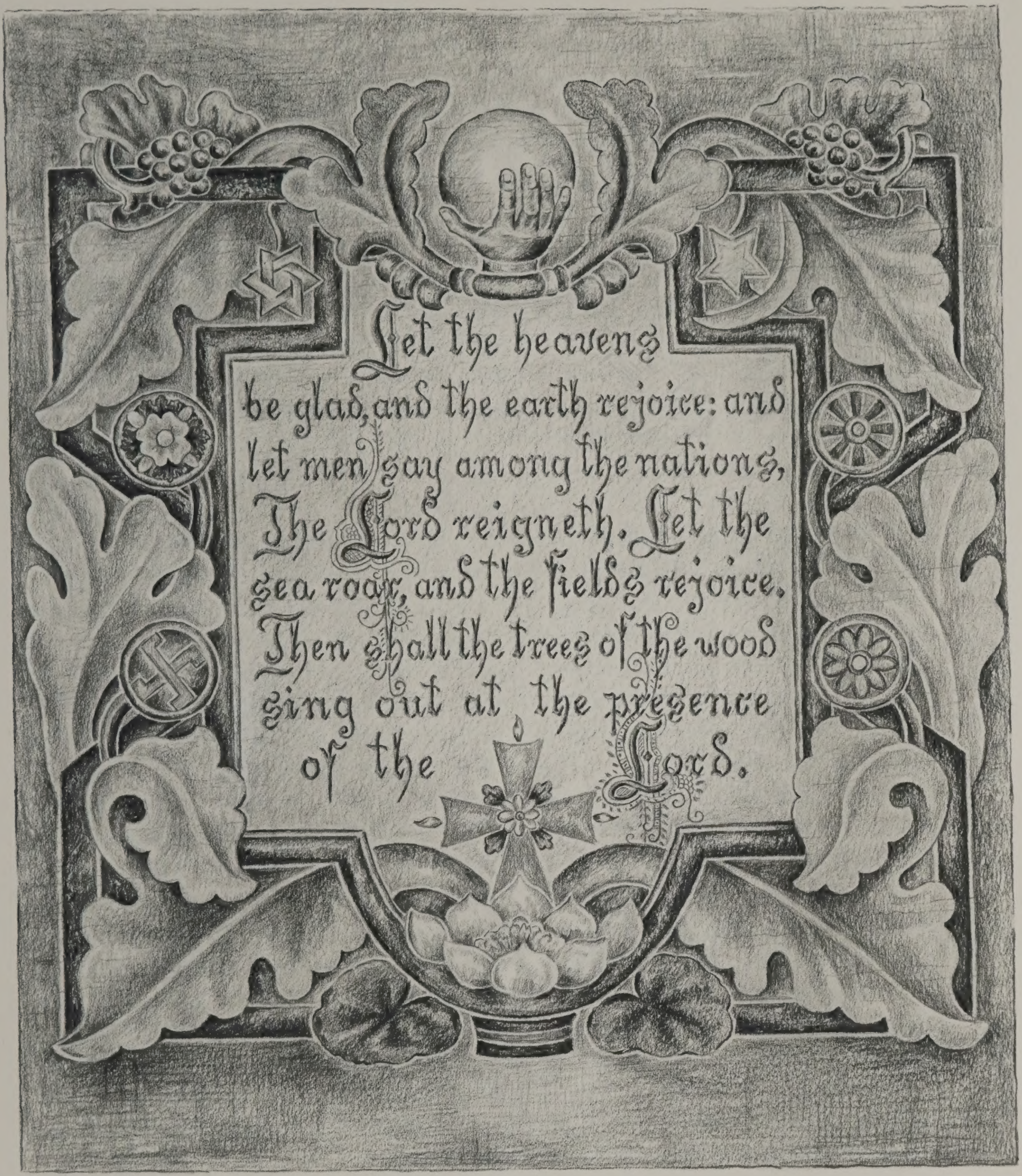
Working within the Chapel I began to hear sounds over my head. Something bumped and slid off the roof! I held my breath. Who had fallen, Don or Milt? When I heard their two deep-toned voices I knew everything was going as planned. Soon the poles were upright and held in place by crossed planks on all four sides. A platform was built level with the eaves. Standing on this they worked upwards toward the final platform, level with the topmost ridgepole. Three heavy planks were laid from this to the railing of the belfry. Their voices starting with a measured drone grew higher as excitement mounted. At last, they were ready to take the final step. A friend of Milt's joined them and now three voices mingled in tense grunts and groans. Again I held my breath. The dead silences between those guttural sounds were the most terrifying. What was happening? Why didn't they say something? Suddenly all three would be talking and laughing at the same time. At last the bell was safely on the top platform.

This was too exciting to miss and I hurried outside. There was still another important step. The bell must be dragged across those three planks stretched from the top platform to the belfry some twenty feet above the ground. The planks could only hold one man with the added weight of the two hundred pound bell. This was no job for a man with acrophobia. Milt elected himself for this job and little by little he edged the bell along. The planks bent and sagged dangerously. Would they hold? They did, and finally it was alongside the belfry. The others joined him and together they hoisted the bell into its cradle. Don called to me to pull the rope that had been pushed down through a pipe emerging close to the pulpit. I pulled lustily and soon the forest echoed its joyful peals. For how many years to come will the Chapel bell be ringing? Will our children's children respond to its sound with the same thrill?

The next two panels to be painted were directly under Mark, and the one just finished of "Ye shall go out with joy——." Perhaps there was joy in going out, but in sitting down cross-legged on the floor for days on end there were only sighs and groans.



Ye shall go
out with joy and be led forth
with peace. The mountains
and hills shall break forth
before you into singing, and
all the trees of the fields
shall clap their hands, for
my Presence will go with you.



Let the heavens
be glad, and the earth rejoice: and
let men say among the nations,
The Lord reigneth. Let the
sea roar, and the fields rejoice.
Then shall the trees of the wood
sing out at the presence
of the Lord.

To relieve this situation, part of each day I spent in the final preparations for the last big design of Scripture, one of the most important and significant in the Chapel. Months of research had already been put on it. For years, our lives had been centered around conditions imposed by World War II. Many of us had lived through World War I, and now we were part of a deadly "Cold War", with articles being published daily on the possibilities of World War III. In the hope of abolishing wars the greatest material forces known to man were now being developed, yet war and the threat of war still persisted. What power remained that would save man from himself? World unity does not come through human strength or national strength. As Americans we may have faith in the strength of America; other people may have faith in other nations, but this will never bring world unity nor peace. The challenge that exists today is the imperative need to have faith in God and faith in mankind, the need to overcome every warring faction within the thought of each individual. Then will come the time when all men are heard to speak the same language of mind and spirit, and there can be unity and enduring peace. Then at last, "the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord."

It seemed to us that this little Sanctuary of Peace would be incomplete without a panel expressing this ultimate hope. "Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let men say among the nations, 'The Lord reigneth.' Let the sea roar . . . and the fields rejoice, . . . then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the Lord." Within the design of leaves surrounding this passage the symbols of many world religions are included in order that the meaning of this panel be fully expressed.

The Lotus leaf and flower at the bottom is one of the symbols used by the Hindu, Egyptian, Assyrian, and Greek religions. The Chinese symbol of the Buddha is often depicted seated on a lotus. One of our earliest Christian symbols was the Cross surmounting the lotus flower. The roots of this exquisite white flower are embedded in the mire. Out of the depths of darkness blooms the flower of peace.

Above this on the left is the Swastika, one of the earliest religious symbols. It was found on the battle-ax of Thor and was the monogram of Vishnu. The ancients saw it as the motive force and divine impulse, and our American Indians used it as one of their religious symbols. The rosette directly above is the Hindu's symbol of Divine Love and Victory. The six-pointed star represents the Jewish symbol and is known as the Creator's star. On the right of the panel the five-pointed star and crescent moon is used as the Mohammedan and Sabaean symbol. The eight-spoked wheel just below is another symbol of Buddha expressing the perpetual cycles of existence. The nine-petaled flower within the circle is used as the Bahai symbol of unity. And above all, in the center of the panel, is the symbol of the world in the Hand of God.

These symbols, forming a cycle of design are of profound metaphysical significance and represent the progress of spiritual thought through the ages. The worship of God is a universal need of expression. Since the beginning of time mankind has been essentially religious. This impulse toward something higher than himself is a powerful motivating force that lifts mankind to a truer relationship with himself, with his God, and his relationship to his fellow-man. The beautiful theme of the golden rule runs through all these religions. In the Hindu's "Veda" is found, "Do nought to others which if done to thee would cause thee pain; this is the sum of duty." Confucius said, "What you do not want done to yourself, do not unto others;" and Mohammed . . . "No one of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself." These are but a few of similar admonitions shared by these religions which include the golden rule of Christianity stated in a positive form. This theme, which binds together the thought of all who so believe, can still be heard amid the discordant variations of our world today where the dominant tone of scientific materialism tends to drown out all other harmonies. It is not lost however, its beauty and power can still be gathered together with so great a spiritual force that all nations becoming one within the Kingdom of God will say "The Lord reigneth," and rejoice to find a world at peace.

In due time this panel was painted. There were now only two more panels to be finished, the one under Matthew, and the other under the one just completed, but during the month of July there seemed to be no time to paint. The house was full to the brim with our family and friends. To add to our cup of joy another granddaughter was born. Someone suggested we take frequent inventories of our grandchildren as the count changed so rapidly!

Then came an eventful morning in August. It was only slightly overcast, no indication whatever of a coming storm, just another cloudy day and a memorable one for me. The last panel in the Chapel was now to be started. This was the beginning of the end! Regret and joy were mingled with this realization. Forty panels had been completed, not one but had presented some difficult problem. Now all this was forgotten. In my mind there remained only gratitude that the ideas had been able to bud and blossom into form and color. Treasures of the mind were here and "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Gone were the little imps that once sat on my shoulders, nagging and pestering me as I worked. Jeeringly, they would ask, "How can you expect to do these murals when you know so little about painting?" Patiently, humbly, I would answer, "I can try, can't I? If I live long enough perhaps I can even learn." And again the mocking insistence . . . "How can you pretend to interpret Scriptures when you know so little about the Bible?" During the days of discouragement these imps would be most persistent. Now, with the final panel before me I ran my hand over my shoulders, with the feeling of freedom. At last I knew the imps were but echoes of my own doubts and fears.

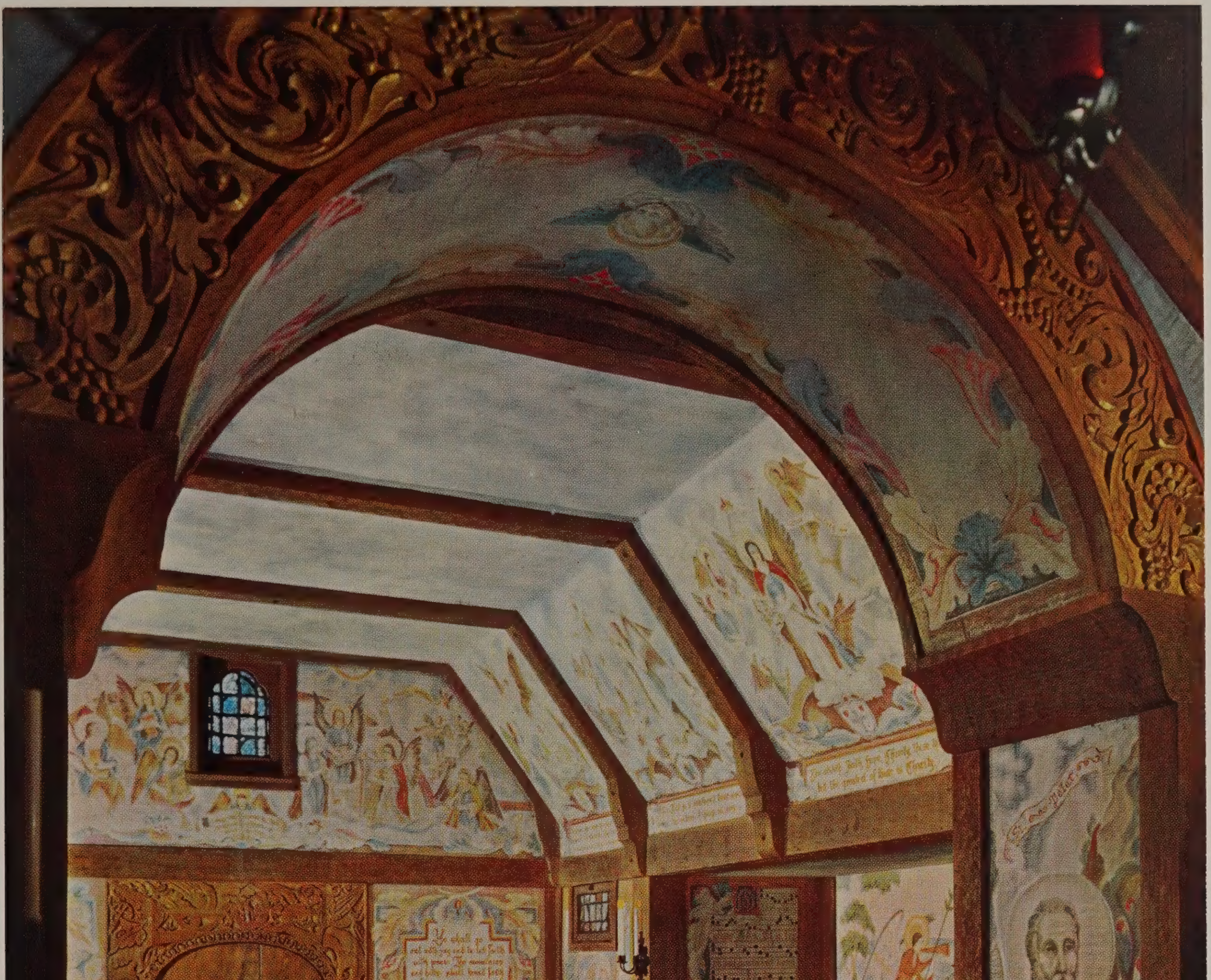
Behind the door, seated cross-legged on the floor under the panel of Matthew, I was ready to paint. The pattern had previously been traced on the plaster. It was too dark to distinguish colors without artificial light. Eager and excited I made good progress and I knew it would be only a few days before I could say, "The Chapel is finished!" How often that statement was made during following weeks, months, and years! How many times new work was discovered that had to be done. In my diary of several years later I find, "Finished painting in the Chapel, but can't leave it alone!"

I was completely engrossed in my work when without warning a terrific explosion seemed to come from underneath. The blast and roar came instantaneously. I remember thinking "This is the end!" The Chapel rocked and blackness enveloped me. Meanwhile Don and Milt were working near the garage about two hundred feet away. Suddenly they saw the skies burst with a blinding flash and crash of thunder. Milt yelled and pointed toward the Chapel. Don whirled to see a great cloud of dirt and stones flung thirty feet into the air, hiding the Chapel completely. He knew I had been working there and started running toward me before he fully sensed what had happened. My first conscious realization was feeling Don's arms around me and knowing that the Chapel was still standing. "What happened?" "What happened?" I asked. Don's voice came as from a distance and was none too strong as he said, "The Chapel saved you. Lightning struck only a few feet away!" Again it seemed that this house of God, protected by His presence, was founded upon a rock which storms could not affect.

Since the completion of the murals was now at hand, we found ourselves thinking of the long anticipated consecration of the Chapel.

During the past years of study and research three ministers had become deeply interested in the problems which the Chapel presented. Their response was never failing whenever we turned to them for counsel. Among them was our close friend Christoph Keller, for many years the beloved Rector of the Trinity Episcopal Church in Highland Park, Illinois. Years ago he had come unexpectedly to Björklunden and had found Don and me in the Chapel experimenting with packing boxes and boards, trying to determine the correct size and proportion for the Altar and Pulpit, the Altar railing and other details of the chancel. Before leaving he knelt and blessed the Chapel and the work of the two inexperienced builders. He already realized what we hoped and dreamed of creating.

And now the time had come for him to consecrate and dedicate our little Chapel. This important day dawned with a flaming burst of glory. By breakfast-time the waters were sparkling as though myriads of glittering sequins had been sewn on the deep blue garment of the lake. Christoph and his wife arrived early. It seemed most important before consecrating the Chapel that the interpretation of each panel be made clear in order that all might understand that every thought within the Chapel revealed the beauty and power of God. Our children joined us there and in those quiet moments the work of many years was explained.


Thou art
Peter,
and on this
rock
I will build
my Church.

Soon our guests arrived, among them ministers from Chicago and nearby suburbs and also ministers from this vicinity. Among the other guests there were those who had part in the building of the Chapel besides many of our closest friends and members of the family.

As we took the narrow path leading to the Chapel, the music of the organ came to meet us. The sun mingled its rays with the light of the candles, softly touching the Cross and the murals. We found our places. Our children were all near us.

This simplest of services included the Invocation, the Lord's Prayer and Collects. The 148th Psalm was read responsively and the Doxology sung. Especially remembered is the passage from Revelation . . . "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them." The consecration itself followed the Psaltery. Christoph invoked God's blessing on all who draw near to Him in this quiet place. Truly a man of God, he brought everything in the Chapel to God by the laying of hands on each and every sacred object in the Chapel. Together we sang "The Church's One Foundation." And with a final prayer and benediction, our little Chapel was turned over to God and we walked out into the bright sunshine as in a dream.

CHAPTER X

THE CHAPEL LIVES

The spirit of God hath . . . given me life.

Job 33:4

THE CHAPEL LIVES

During these latter years the Chapel has remained unchanged . . . nothing has been added to it and nothing has been taken from it. Unchanged? Is that true? Even as our children, having reached full stature, grow year by year into deeper understanding of life so the Chapel has grown in beauty as spiritual vision has reached beyond the limits of former horizons. Daily, the thoughts emanating from it have drawn forth from those who enter a richer and deeper response.

For our family the day begins and ends in the Chapel. In all our activities there is the consciousness of the hovering presence of the Chapel . . . indeed this has been true ever since the Chapel became a part of Björklunden. It has shared in everything we did; not as a restraining influence but as a participating one. This is only natural for do we not share everything with the Chapel, all our joys and all our sorrows?

Gradually the true import of the Chapel was reaching into the hearts and minds of our children. The following cherished few words written to us by one of our children gives evidence of this fact . . . "Some day maybe I'll begin to understand a fraction of all that has gone into the Björklunden Chapel. The more I read and the longer I live, the clearer it becomes evident how little I ever knew, and therefore could have appreciated, of all that it stands for. Daily I have become more appreciative of the teamwork and togetherness behind the work you two have done. The very fact of your consecrated work on the Chapel means that you want God to have a hand in your marriage."

Soon after this came Carl's letter announcing his engagement to Andrée, the lovely French girl he had previously brought to visit us here at Björklunden. They wanted to be married in the Chapel. Carl wrote . . . "It is as difficult to put into words what the Chapel means to me as it is to express the depth of my love for you both. I am fully conscious of how much the Chapel is an expression of your faith and how truly it gives evidence to the constructive force of religion working itself out through your hearts and hands. For me, the feeling inspired by all this beauty and dedication and accomplishment have brought me nearer this Force than I have been since I was a child. Andrée knows how I feel and believes as I do that the Chapel will give a special blessing to our marriage, symbolizing as it does the union of all those having sincere love and faith no matter of what nationality or religion."

In what miraculous ways life makes preparation for future events! Our earliest conception of the Chapel was as a Sanctuary of Peace representing all nations and all creeds. Had there been at that time some prescience of the coming of a precious French daughter? And Carl, teaching French to his company in England during those momentous days of June 1944, had he known that he would be courting his future wife in the same language? Like a pattern everything was taking its place . . . gathering the events of the past to focus them on this blessed union within the Chapel.

It was hard to tell in the preparation prior to the wedding whether our happiness was greater for Carl and Andrée or for the Chapel. It had been quietly waiting to give the family its first wedding service. In these preparations, wanting to include some of the quaint traditions of Scandinavian peasant weddings, we erected above the carved dragon gate of the patio, two pine trees stripped of bark to within four feet from the top, leaving a green pyramid above. Between these the groom's golden crown (made by my sister and me), and studded with enormous jewels, rested on an arch of birch boughs. Under it hung Andrée's and Carl's initials made of garlands of white field daisies. Seeing this, even as of old, passers-by would know that here a wedding was to take place.

The decorations within the Chapel were also traditional. Atop each high carved pew-end, tall white candles were held in place by sprays of cedar and spruce, and massive ropes of cedar, draped from the ceiling, formed a bower for the bridal couple.

No one attending the service will ever forget those answering voices as Carl and Andrée stood looking steadfastly at each other. Whether the words were English or French they were spoken in that universal language of love that was understood by all. The Chapel bell proclaimed the glad message to the woods, to the fields, to France, to everyone, that Andrée and Carl were one.

At the wedding breakfast that followed, the bridal couple, as in olden times, used two wooden spoons bound together by a carved wooden chain, to eat their first meal as man and wife from the same plate, thus symbolizing their oneness (Carl and I bought these spoons in Sweden years before). The towering, festooned wedding cake was the work of Mrs. Peil, an able cateress as well as gardener! This was the third cake she had decorated for our children.

Now came the time when the bride, blindfolded, must place her golden crown on the head of one of the maidens circling around her, who would then, as promised by Odin and Thor and all the Scandinavian gods of yore, be the next to become a happy bride. Throughout the gayeties the dragons grinned down from the ridge-poles of the house with self-conscious proprietorship as though to say . . . "See what we have done! We have kept evil away from this home and have brought happiness to you all!" Was it my imagination or did my ancestor, Hrolff, chuckle delightedly from afar?

The Chapel had first lived in our hearts, then in our children's and soon it would live in those of our grandchildren. Six of our ten grandchildren have now been Christened at our Chapel font. Each occasion was different and each had its special significance for us. The first two grandsons to be Christened lived wholly in a world of cowboys and there was much uncertainty as to whether in the end they would not have to be lassoed and held down while the ceremony took place. We were completely unprepared when they solemnly climbed onto one of the nearby pews and with folded hands listened spellbound to the minister's beautiful reading of the service. Quietly each one came to the minister and looked up trustingly into his face.

Since then four other Christenings of our grandchildren have taken place and there will be more to come. For Don and me these intimate ceremonies bring a deep sense of fulfillment to lives already full. The Chapel itself was being fulfilled.

And now our friends are entering into the life of the Chapel. Every Summer brought some unexpected event and we were delighted when two close friends from California joined us here. Both of them had been members of the Metropolitan Opera Company and we had music, music, from morning until night. The high point of their visit was the Sunday Vesper service in the candle-lit Chapel. The famous tenor of former years sang a simple hymn he had loved as a boy. Forgotten were the vocal limitations of recent years. We heard again the magnificent voice of Pagliacci, the voice of Chevalier des Grieu singing to Manon. And then followed the pure, clear soprano of Micaela singing now Malotte's setting of the twenty-third Psalm. The Chapel, reaching down into that spiritual reservoir of beauty drew forth liquid tones that flooded our hearts. As we closed the door of the Chapel I seemed to hear from the shadows within, a deep sigh of satisfaction and . . . "I have waited long for this, knowing that it would come." We followed the lantern-lit path out into the Summer night.

A Swedish mid-summer's fete was the high point of another Summer with a Maypole and square-dancing for old and young on the lawn after a dinner of Smörgåsbord. All of the members of our family wore native costumes and we spent days in re-learning the Swedish National dance of the Hambo in order to teach it to others. A three-piece orchestra of nearby farmers agreed to come as soon as the cows were milked. Not Petrillo, but the cows, controlled their orchestral hours! We found "Old Doc" the famous square-dance caller of Door County and his lusty voice sang out the turns.

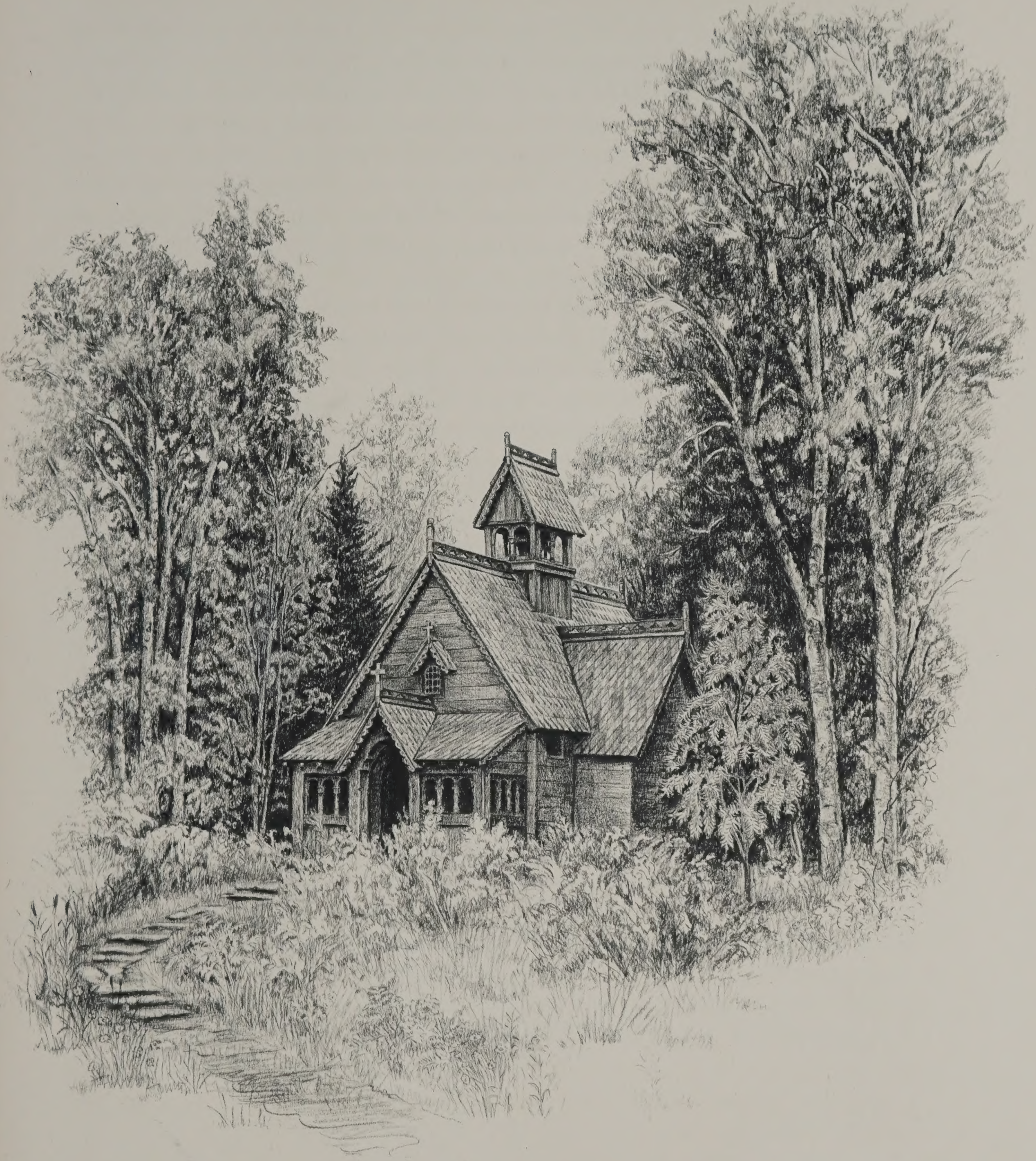
From the terrace we watched the rosy tints of the sun's afterglow deepening into veridian above the darkening waters, and soon the smiling moon appeared to watch the dancers circling around the Maypole. By the time it had passed high meridian, music and shouts echoed through the trees when suddenly the deep-toned sound of the Chapel bell was heard. The midnight hour had come bringing in the Sabbath. Voices were hushed as we turned toward the Chapel. Little lanterns edging the path flickered in the darkness. Through the open door the light of the candles within streamed out to meet us as we drew near. We heard the sound of the organ and singing as we filled the Chapel to overflowing. Joyfully our voices joined in "Fairest Lord Jesus," this hymn that seemed to belong to us, of the fields and the woodlands, that "made the heart to sing." Closing with "Now the Day is Over" we turned and read together the Portal Benediction. Silently, we filed out of the Chapel into the sudden stillness of the night. The voices of friendly "good-byes" dimmed in the distance and melted into the darkness of that early morning. The stars seemed close in the heavens above. Slowly the moon slipped behind the western trees and was gone.

There was yet another step to be taken by the Chapel. There had always been the desire to share it with others, but as each succeeding year brought more and more people it became for us a serious problem. Sometimes three hundred came in a day from many miles away. I am sure the Chapel suffered as much as we did. The idea of the Sanctuary of Peace, as a place for meditation and prayer, was completely overlooked by the continuous stream of eager, excited crowds of people that surged in and out. It became fully evident that we had not found the right way to share the Chapel.

The answer to this problem was always there and soon it was clearly recognized. The Chapel was the house of God . . . "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him." It was only in silence and worship that the true life of the Chapel could be shared. With the heart-warming co-operation of five young ministers whose dedicated work is bringing inspiration to the people of their churches in this vicinity, the problem was solved. Now, during the Summer months the Chapel is open to all only for Vesper Services, conducted by one of these ministers, every Sunday afternoon at five o'clock.

Long before this hour people begin to come, finding their way through the winding roads by the help of little guideposts pointing the way to the Chapel. An adjoining field has been leveled for the parking of automobiles.

Quietly the people take the little path leading to the Chapel. Soft music, often played by our oldest daughter, Edith, is heard from within the candle-lit interior. Pamphlets, which may be read while waiting for the service to start, are found on the pews. They explain the spiritual meaning of each of the murals. In this waiting stillness only the sounds of nature are heard, the wind in the trees, the gentle lapping of the water, the answering notes of the birds.



Whenever the Chapel is filled the Chapel bell is rung and the services begin. Sometimes it is necessary to repeat these several times in order that all who come may participate within the Chapel. These services are short and simple. Together we read responsively a Litany based on the Scriptural passages used in the murals. The voices of the congregation join in singing and in prayer; the minister gives his sincere and inspired message. All seems unified with the surrounding beauty, reaching down into the hearts of everyone present with a penetrating poignancy that brings peace and the comforting nearness of God. And with the completion of the service we repeat together the Portal Benediction . . . "Ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace. The mountains and hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands . . . For My Presence will go with you."

Thus the Chapel lives and is reaching out in an ever broadening circle. For Don and me these beautiful services bring a deep sense of fulfillment. Over the years of its building, the Chapel has shown us how to find peace within ourselves; it has given us courage by strengthening our faith to meet the terrible uncertainties of the last war and if need be, the next. And now, the Chapel is reaching out to others; its influence has no boundaries for from its very inception the purpose of the Chapel was to express the beauty of peace and the power and the glory of God.

Our part in the building of the Chapel is completed. Even as we leave our children in God's never failing care, knowing that He will do for them far better things than we can desire or pray for, so to Him, we leave this Chapel.

POSTLUDE

AND NOW, my children, I have done as you asked. I have gone back to the beginning when this beloved Chapel was merely an idea. I have tried to wrap in words and to put down on a printed page, experiences that can neither be defined nor confined within any limits. For nine years your father and I have worked together to build this little Sanctuary of Peace. Somewhere along that span of time, I cannot tell you just when it was, we became aware that in reality the Chapel was building us. As day by day we built with physical tools, patiently and painstakingly the Chapel was building with spiritual tools. We have come to see what was unseen before, to hear what was unheard; and to understand things not understood before. We say . . . "The Chapel is finished," but we know that the Chapel will never be finished, for it lives, it speaks, it even sings, if you but listen. It has shown us that before we can wear the garment of peace we must weave it with threads of the spirit.

Peace is not found in a passive acceptance of life, but in active participation in the God-given forces that are forever flowing from Him. The Chapel has shown us, and it will show others, that to work with love and to find joy in the doing is to love life and find joy in living. Through the building of this little Chapel at Björklunden, your father and I know this to be true.

May, 1953

This book, designed by Ben Collins, was engraved and printed by The Beck Engraving Company, Philadelphia, in May 1953. All of the drawings were rendered by the author, Winifred Case Boynton, from her original designs for the Chapel. The initial letters and chapter head-bands are adaptations of segments of the artist's drawings of the Baptismal Font; the cover design, a panel from the Pulpit. The black and white illustrations were reproduced and printed in sheet-fed gravure, the text in letterpress, on special esparto grass paper. The color plates are four-color process reproductions of Kodachrome transparencies. The text, which was edited by William Atkin of Reinhold Publishing Corporation, was set in fourteen point Linotype Granjon and Goudy Old Style.
This edition is of five thousand copies.

WINIFRED C. BOYNTON

From her childhood on, Winifred Boynton's life has been filled with religion, art, music, and civic and charity work.

The decision to build a Norwegian Chapel in the woods may be traced back partly to her Norwegian ancestry and partly to her religious background. Her grandfather was and her brother still is a minister. "From my childhood memories," she has said, "Sunday was anything but a day of rest. The entire family rose early for morning prayers. Soon after this we were taken to Sunday school, which was followed by church attendance. Sunday evenings were spent singing hymns which we all loved."

For a short time before her marriage she studied art in the Chicago Art Institute. Later she studied voice, continuing her musical interests which had begun when she played accompaniments first for her mother and then on a professional basis. Mrs. Boynton gave several vocal recitals, but her musical career came to an end when her hearing was seriously impaired following a severe illness. As a result of this impairment, all artistic interests seemed to be channeled back into the field of art.

While making her own hearing adjustments, Mrs. Boynton became aware of the need for greater public understanding of this handicap, especially in the case of children. For sixteen years she was a member of the Board of Directors of the Chicago Hearing Society, serving as Chairman of the Board for two years, and is at the present time the only Honorary member of the Hearing Society Board. Mrs. Boynton also served on the Board of the American Hearing Society for many years. Gradually goals for prevention of hearing loss began to be realized. Through aroused public sympathy these handicapped children have been able to take their rightful place with normal hearing children.

When Mr. Boynton retired from his business, Mrs. Boynton retired from her board memberships so that she might give her undivided attention to the Chapel and its artistic demands.

REINHOLD PUBLISHING CORPORATION